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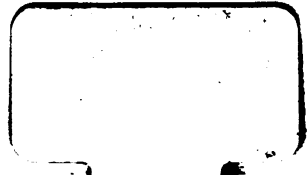
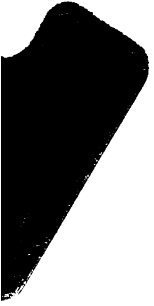
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THE TRAIL TO BOYLAND

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THE
TRAIL TO BOYLAND

AND OTHER STORIES

By
WILBUR D. NESBIT

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
WILL VANTER

INDIANAPOLIS
THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY
PUBLISHERS



**THE
TRAIL TO BOYLAND**

AND OTHER POEMS

By
WILBUR D. NESBIT

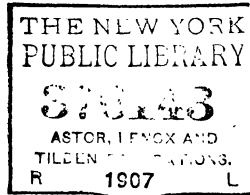
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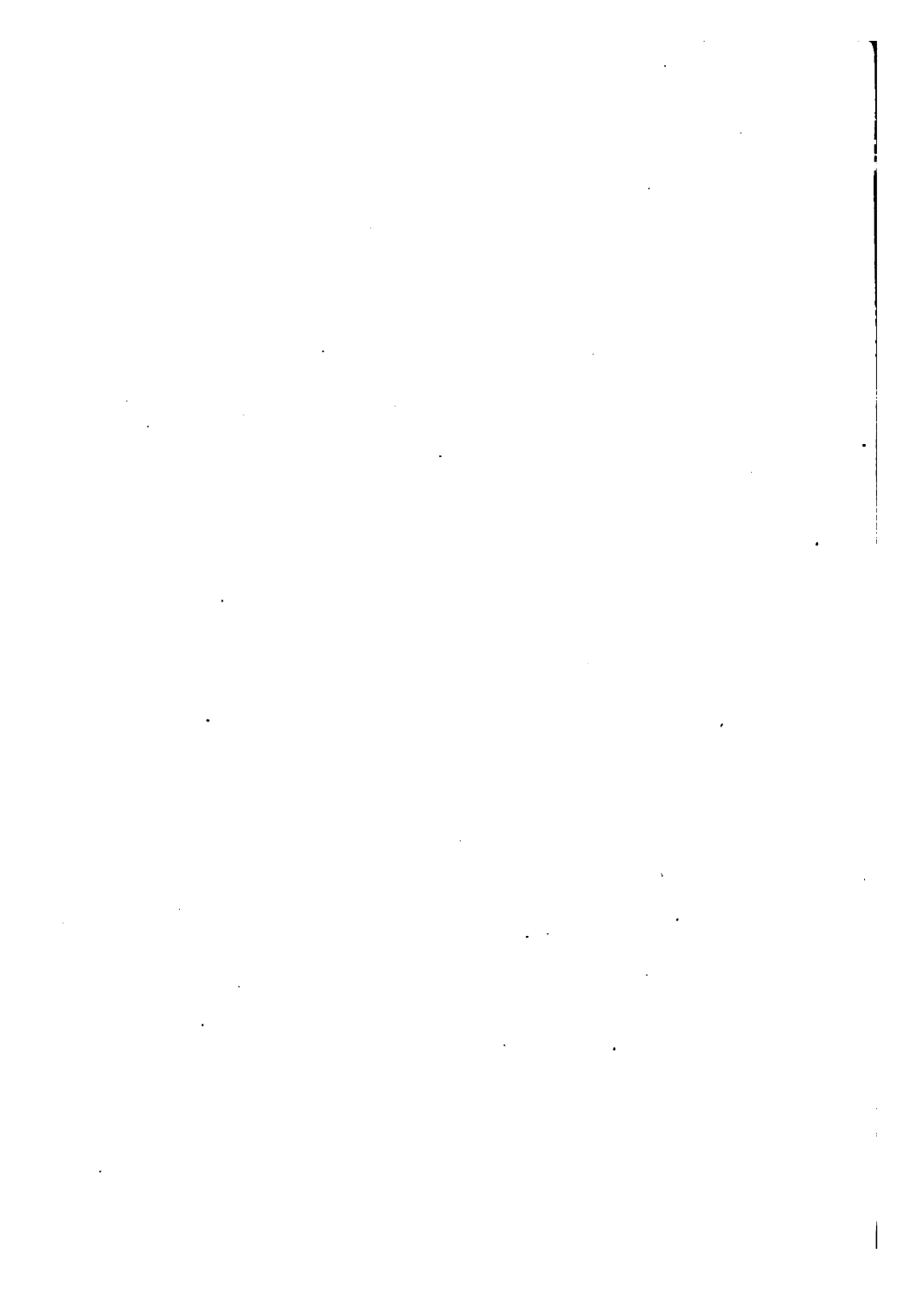
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TO MY WIFE

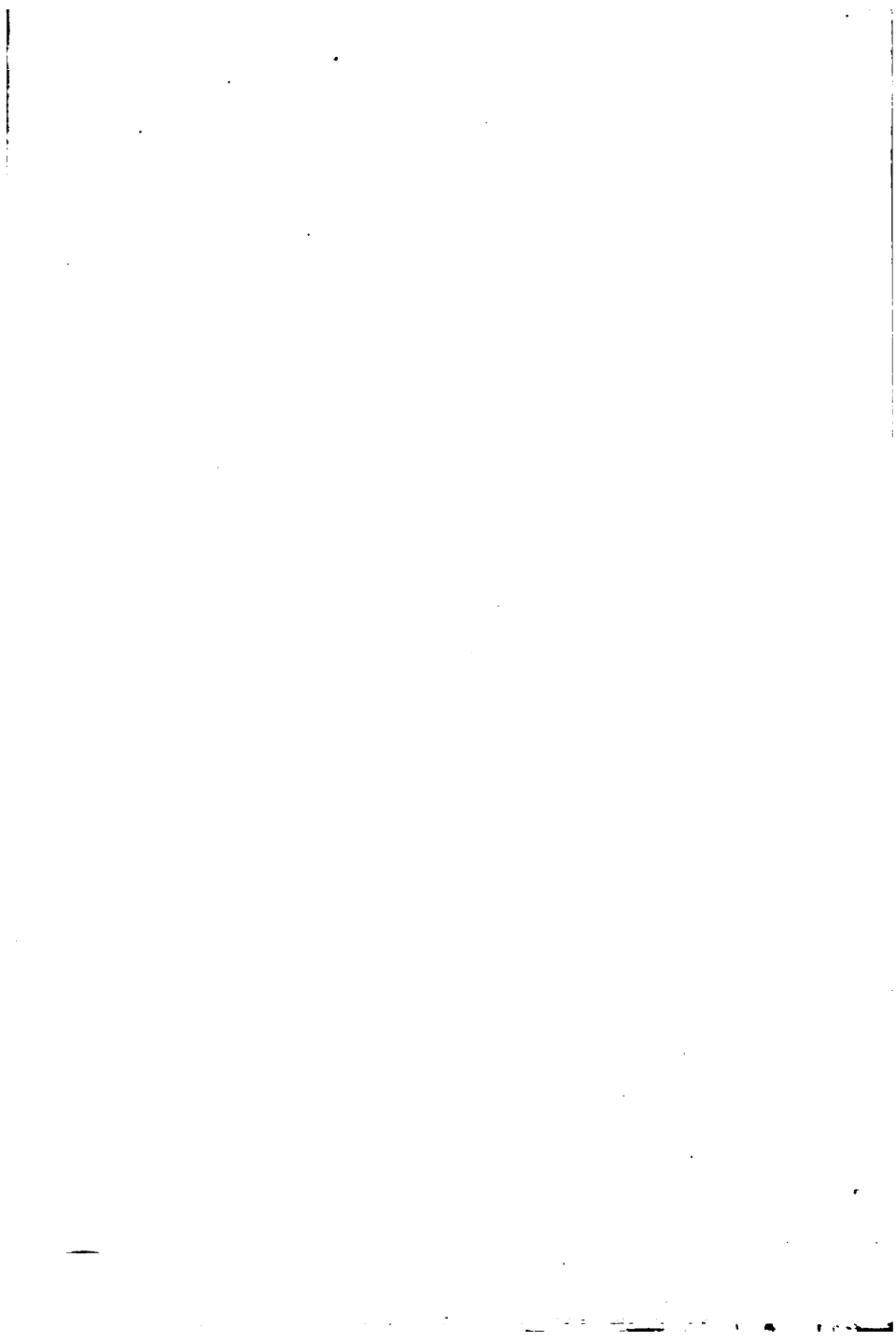


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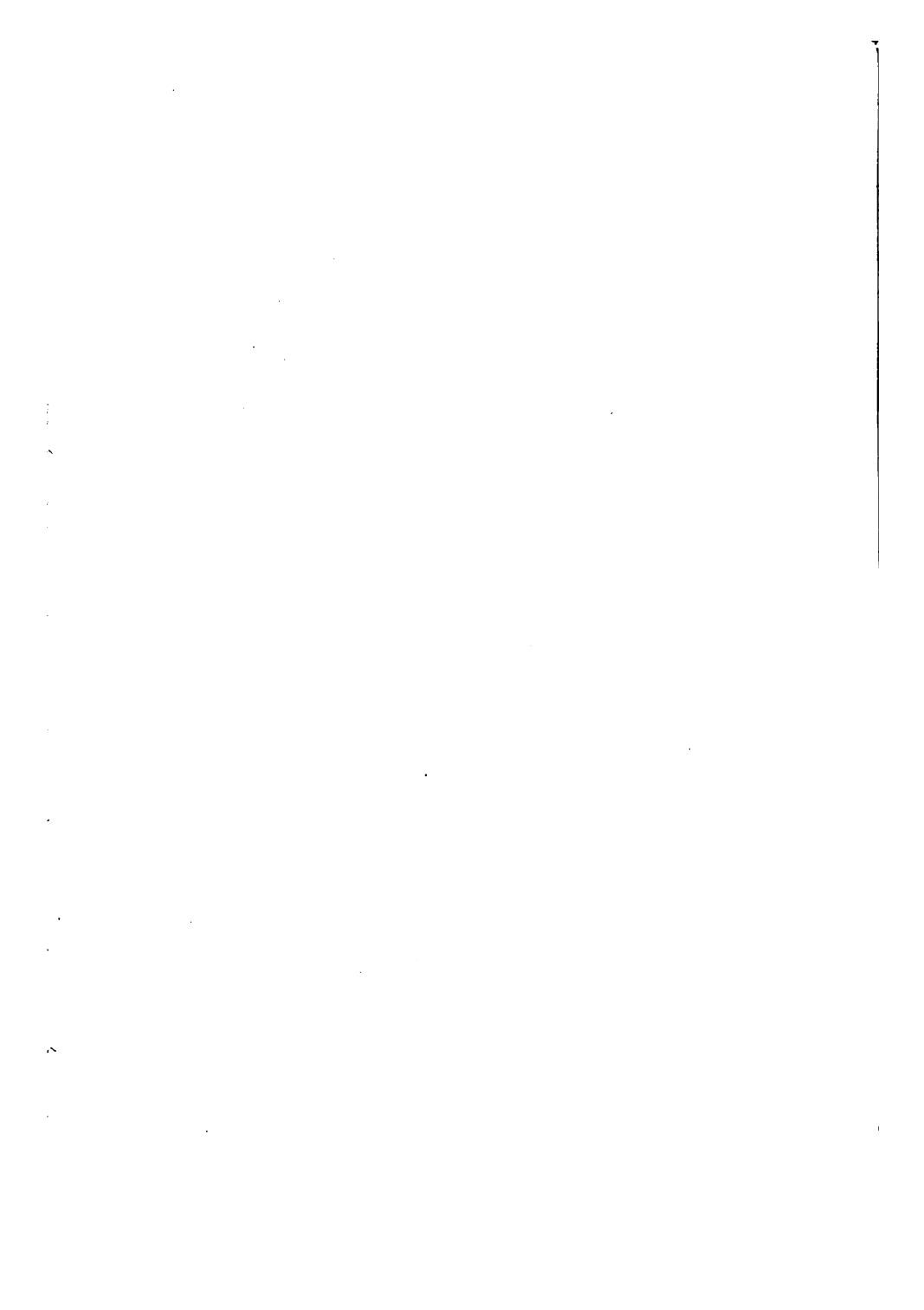


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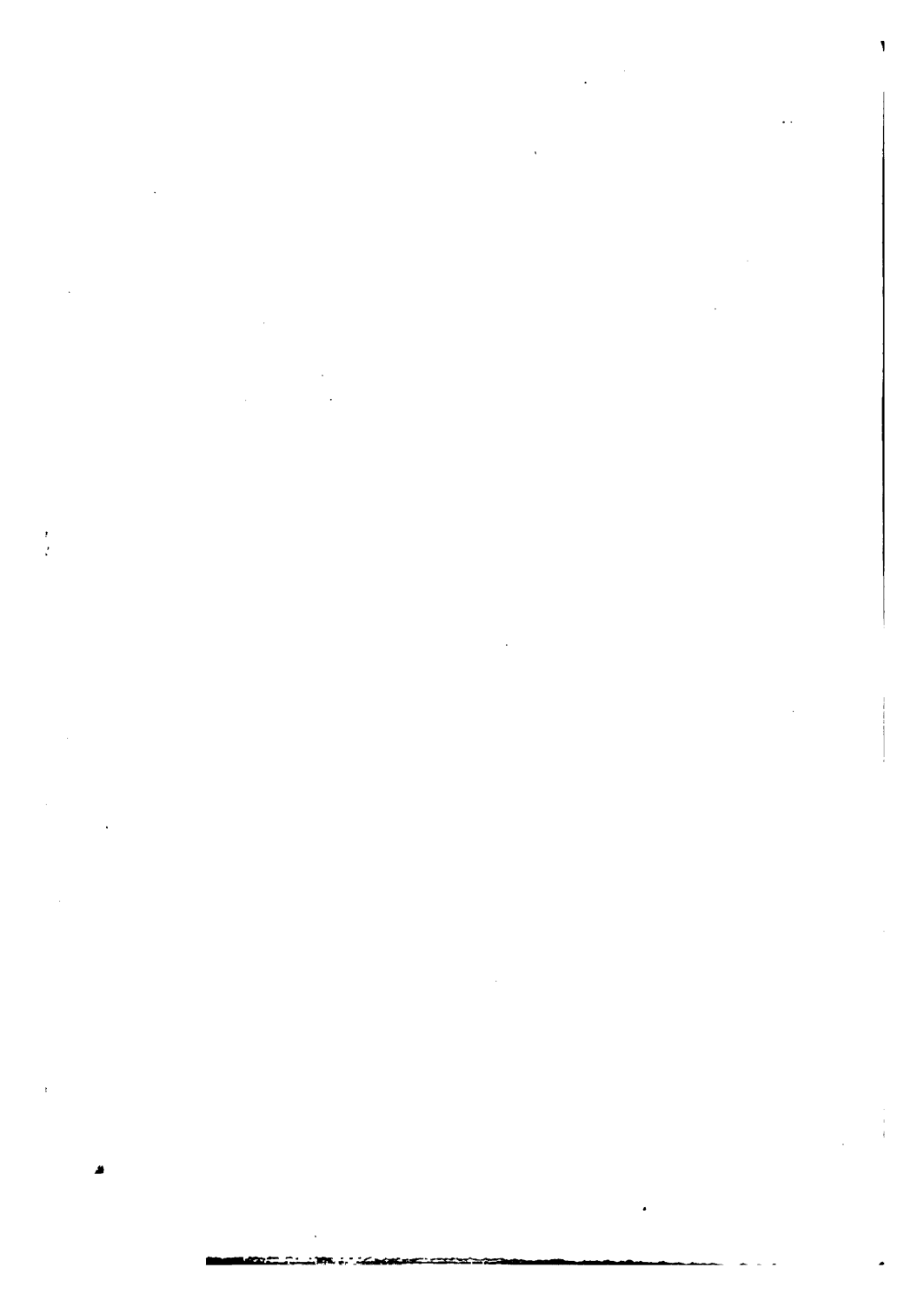
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THE TRAIL TO BOYLAND



THE TRAIL TO BOYLAND

Where the maple leaves are yellow
And the apples plump and mellow,
And the purple grapes are bursting with their rich au-
tumnal wine,
And the oak leaves redly flaming—
All the blaze of sunset shaming—
Is a trail that wanders idly to a land of yours and mine.

It goes through the grassy hollows
And across the hills; it follows
All the playful turns and curvings of the ever-singing
streams;
Overgrown with tangled grasses,
All the olden haunts it passes
Till it fades into a vista that is cherished in our dreams.

Past the pokeweeds and their berries
And the dance-halls of the fairies,
Over field and through the forest it goes ever on and on,
With the thrush and killdee singing;
And the redbird madly winging
Far ahead of us to somewhere, where the sunset meets
the dawn.

THE TRAIL TO BOYLAND

Up and down, the hillside hugging,
With the hazel bushes tugging
At our arms, and blushing sumach holding spicy berries
out;
And the haw-trees and the beeches,
Hickories and plums and peaches—
Just as young and just as plenty—all our thoughts of
age to flout!

So it stretches and it glistens,
Far away—and he who listens
Hears the echo of the hailings and the murmur of a song
That comes through the silence throbbing—
Half with laughter, half with sobbing—
Till it clutches at the heart-strings and would hold them
overlong.

'Tis the trail—the Trail to Boyland—
How it spans the miles to joyland!
Passing leafy lane and blossom-tangled vine, and bush
and tree,
Coaxing bees till they, in coming,
Fill the hush of noon with humming—
And the wondrous way to Boyland stretches fair for you
and me!

THE OLD WELL

It seems just like 't'uz yesterday
An' me a younker o' thirteen—
One-gallused, freckled, full o' play,
Th' boy-est boy you ever seen!
A-rompin' over all th' town
An' gettin' het up fit to kill,
Then takin' time to simmer down
At that ol' well by Mitchell's mill.

Remember it? Th' shaky pump
'Ith water drippin' from th' spout,
Or gushin' when—kalump! kalump!—
We'd almost pull th' handle out.
We'd catch a cupful an' we'd drink,
An', say, but it was cold an' sweet!
It makes me young again to think
How it 'ud spatter on my feet.

W'y, Kil Dunlap, one time he said
That water wuz th' best on earth
An' any man whose thirst 'uz fed
On it 'ud get his money's worth.

THE OLD WELL

Yes, sir—the best! W’y, even yet
I hear him sayin’ it as plain—
An’ he had traveled, don’t forget,
F’om Californy plumb to Maine!

Well-water nowadays— But, pshaw!
They ain’t none now ’at fills th’ bill.
I never drunk an’ never saw
As good as that at Mitchell’s mill.
An’ when I think o’ how I used
To let it run an’ go to waste,
My thirstiness is all unloosed
An’ I fair shrivel for a taste!

THE BOY-DAYS

As I was in the days of my youth.—Job.

The boy-days—the boy-days—they were the best of all!
Through all the hushes of the years the boy-days ever
call;
Out of the darkness of the night resplendently they
shine,
And what a wreath of memories for one and all they
twine!
No matter what of baser stuff the later years may hold,
We may look up and back and see the boy-days all were
gold.

The boy-days—the boy-days—when come the threads of
gray,
You may live in To-morrow, but you dream of Yesterday;
You may look in the mirror, but the only face you see
Is one that has the semblance of the boy you used to be;
And, musing, you may stumble on a broken bit of song
That wanders from the boy-days in a cadence sweet and
strong.

THE BOY-DAYS

The boy-days—a picture with not a hue to fade;
The glamour of the grasses where the summer sunshine
played;
The sparkle of the ripple in some jolly little stream
Whose song was built of jewels of a never-dying gleam;
The nodding of the roses; and the whiteness of the
snow—
They blend across the picture of the long and long ago.

The boy-days—the boy-days—we never lose them all;
The best of all the memories, they come at fancy's call.
Somehow they are made perfect by the alchemy of years,
Which keeps alive the smiles they held and never finds
the tears.
The heart is but a treasure chest our precious things to
hold,
And chiefest of the goodly store is all the boy-days' gold.

THE FIFTH READER

“McGuffey’s New Fifth Reader”—

Found in some dusty nook;
Dog’s-eared and worn and tattered—
A yellowed, faded book
With checkered cotton cover
Of careful stitch and fold.
Let’s turn the ragged pages
And see what it may hold.

* * * * *

They’ve raised the school-room window—

My, but the sky is blue!
And there’s a pigeon strutting,
With melancholy coo;
And over there a hillside
Where leafy, spreading trees
Wave arms in useless summons
With every passing breeze.

Off yonder is an orchard—

Don’t you catch the perfume
And hear the teacher thank us
For that big bunch of bloom?

THE FIFTH READER

The buzzing sounds of study
And writing—can't you hear?
And see where all the bad boys
Have good seats at the rear?

Now, let your head drop slowly
And look away—away—
Straight through the open window,
Through all the miles of day,
Across the sighing meadow,
And down the merry brook,
Which babbles of its travels
Through tempting field and nook.

The old school bell! You hear it?
Does it not bring to you
The lazy early mornings
When flowers dripping dew
Smiled knowingly, and flaunted
Their banners in your way?
* * * * *

It's all in this Fifth Reader
Which you have found to-day.

HICKORY NUTTIN'

The bes' time in the year for boys is when it's hickory
nuttin'—

There's been a frost an' all the hulls is openin' an' shut-
in'

An' winkin' at the squirrels that just jumps round an'
chatters

An' scoots about a mile away when "plop!" a big nut
clatters.

Us boys is glad on Saturdays—we're off of all our
studies.

I wouldn't trade my fun that day for yours or anybody's!

You get a good two-bushel sack an' sling it on your
shoulder

An' wear your mittens an' your scarf—ma says it will
get colder—

An' then you strike out on the pike until you cross the
river—

We use to go in swimmin' there. Ooh! Makes a fellow
shiver!

From there you cut acrost the fields; it doesn't take a
minute

Until you see a shaggy tree, an' then—why, then you're
in it!

HICKORY NUTTIN'

The shaggy tree's the shellbark kind; there ain't a nut
that beats it,

I don't care where you get it at, nor when a fellow eats it.
But butternuts is purty good; it ain't so hard to shake
'em,

An' then there's hazel-nuts around an' us boys always
take 'em.

So purty soon you get your sack filled plumb up to the
middle,

An' when you shake it there's a tune that's better than a
fiddle.

You don't go home the way you come; you cut acrost by
Tucker's,

An' strike a ripe pe'simmon tree, an' fill your lips with
puckers;

An' mebbe there's some dried-up grapes—the wild kind
—still a-clingin'

Upon the frost-bit vines along the river-banks a-swingin';
But then you haf to climb a fence; that sack sets you
a-reelin',

It bumps you in the back, an' where you have a hungry
feelin'.

So, you start home acrost the farms, the weeds an' stubble
crackin'—

You playin' you're a Injun an' that it's a bear you're
trackin';

HICKORY NUTTIN'

Afore you know how late it is the edge o' town you've
sighted,

An' get all empty inside when you see the street lamps
lighted.

You never feel that heavy sack when you walk home,
a-struttin'—

The bes' time in the year for boys is when it's hickory
nuttin'.

THE BOY THAT YOU USED TO BE

Would you know him again to-day,
If, somehow, he should come to you,
If he halted you on the way
Would your memory serve you true?
With the air of the old boy-days,
With the smile that was fair and free,
Would you know, if he met your gaze,
Just the boy that you used to be?

Ho! The boy that you used to be,
Ere you wrinkled with care and fret!
What a wonder if you could see
That boy! Isn't he living yet?
Does he never come back in dreams
Made of memory's witchery?
Straight and fair in the rosy gleams—
Just the boy that you used to be!

Do you never hold speech with him
In that past, with its afterglow?
See his figure, though blurred and dim—
Ask him why did he ever go?

THE BOY THAT YOU USED TO BE

**Do you never go hand in hand—
Wander back, till again you see
All the charm of the lost Boyland
With the boy that you used to be?**

**Does he know you, when oft he comes
Where you dream all your dreams alone?
Is the melody that he hums
But the one that to song has grown?
Honest-hearted and white of soul—
Do you know such a one as he?
Then you're reaching the greatest goal—
Just the boy that you used to be.**

SORGHUM TIME

I'm mighty glad when sorghum time is gittin' round again
'Cause Uncle Silas allus sends a big jug of it nen
An' ma she puts th' jug away behime th' cellar stairs
'Cause 'at's th' cooles' spot they is in our house any-
wheres.

An' nen she gits a pitcher full for all us folks to use,
An' when we're eatin' breakfas', pa he makes us curly-
cues.

My pa can take th' pitcher up an' let th' sorghum run
Out of it in a teeny stream—an' I tell you it's fun
When he jest makes it whirl around mos' ever' which-
away
An' w'ites my name wite on my plate—he makes th' big-
ges' J
An' nen he whops th' sorghum 'round fer O, an' H, an'
N—
An' nen I'm purty tickled 'cause it's sorghum time again.

Ma ain't th' same as pa—she ses molasses ain't as good
As pencils is to w'ite things 'ith, 'at sorghum's made fer
food.

SORGHUM TIME

But pa he laffs an' sez he 'lows as how it wouldn't do
Fer wimmen-folks to w'ite 'ithout no handle fer to chew.
Nen ma she says she pities men 'at never sees no jokes
'Ithout it's somepin' 'at's made up about th' wimmen-
folks.

O' course they're only funnin'. Nen my ma sometimes
she takes
Th' pitcher in her hand an' makes me elephunts an'
snakes
An' turkles, too—an' nen I wait until they run and
spread
An' nen I tell 'em all good-by an' dip in 'ith my bread.
I like it bes' when pa whops out that J, O, H an' N,
But I'm as glad as anything it's sorghum time again.

JOHNNY'S PA

My pa—he always went to school,
He says, an' studied hard.
W'y, when he's just as big as me
He knew things by the yard!
Arithmetic? He knew it all
From dividend to sum;
But when he tells me how it was,
My grandma, she says "Hum!"

My pa—he always got the prize
For never bein' late;
An' when they studied joggerfy
He knew 'bout every state.
He says he knew the rivers, an'
Knew all their outs an' ins;
But when he tells me all o' that,
My grandma, she just grins.

My pa, he never missed a day
A-goin' to the school,
An' never played no hookey, nor
Forgot the teacher's rule;

JOHNNY'S PA

An' every class he's ever in,
The rest he always led.
My grandma, when pa talks that way,
Just laughs, an' shakes her head.

My grandma says 'at boys is boys,
The same as pas is pas,
An' when I ast her what she means
She says it is "because."
She says 'at little boys is best
When they grows up to men,
Because they know how good they was,
An' tell their children, then!

HONEY-HAUNTED

Doc Stewart's bees—they knew the town
As well as any boy of us.
They searched the gardens up and down;
They—bee-like—were industrious.
Their honey—Oh, the tang it had!—
As mellow as the richest wine
Which holds no dream that is not glad—
A soothing sweetness, fair and fine.

The old-time honey! Amber-hued
And syrupy—and how it clung
As though the bees in sleepy mood
Had loitered where the poppies swung!
And how its pungent perfume filled
The air, whenever it was spread,
As if some jocund elf had spilled
The glory of a flower-bed!

Why, you could shut your eyes and taste
The wild red roses by the mill,
And mark the way the bees had traced
The clover blooms beyond the hill;

HONEY-HAUNTED

And there were hints of violets
And honeysuckles ; lilacs, too,
Had paid their lavish honey-debts
And left their fragrance floating through.

The old-time honey ! Who has sung
Of sweeter memories than this ?
A rarer morsel on the tongue
Has never filled the heart with bliss.
It held the songs of summer days,
And whisperings of scented trees—
Down boyhood's unforgotten ways
There comes the croon of Stewart's bees.

"SH-H-H!"

My ma—she's up-stairs in bed,
An' *It's* there wif her.
It's all bundled up an' red—
Can't nobody stir;
Can't nobody say a word
Since *It* come to us.
Only thing 'at I have heard,
'Ceptin' all *Its* fuss,
Is "*Sh-h-h!*"

I goed in to see my ma,
Nen clumb on th' bed.
Was she glad to see me? Pshaw!
"*Sh-h-h!*"—'at's what she said!
Nen *It* blinked an' tried to see—
Nen I runned away
Out to my old apple-tree
Where no one could say
"*Sh-h-h!*"

"SH-H-H!"

Nen I laid down on th' ground
An' say 'at I jest wish
I was big! An' there's a sound—
'At old tree says "*Sh-h-h!*"
Nen I cry an' cry an' cry
Till my pa, he hears
An' comed there an' wiped my eye
An' mop' up th' tears—
Nen sez "*Sh-h-h!*"

I'm go' tell my ma 'at she
Don't suit me one bit—
Why d' they all say "*Sh-h-h!*" to me
An' not say "*Sh-h-h!*" to *It?*

TUNING UP

I reckon I'll be ready for the spring, when it gets here—
The folks is huntin' up the yarbs an' boilin' 'em down
clear;
The boneset an' the feverwort that's hung there in the
loft
Was put into the kittle just this mornin', when I coughed.
Ma says m'laria's sure as death to settle in your bones,
An' keeps her ears half-triggered for the first display o'
moans.

I reckon I'll be ready for the spring now, pretty soon—
The sulphur an' molasses cure is gettin' me in tune.
I hardly like to take it, an' my backbone gets a sag
As soon as ma is mixin' it—an' oftentimes I gag!
But if I swaller it right down, an' let it clear my skin,
I'll be in shape to greet the spring when it comes rompin'
in.

I reckon I'll be ready for the spring, the way ma acts—
She's soakin' me an' dosin' me with sweetened sassafrax,
An' slipp'ry-ellum water for to keep away sore throat,
An' pennyrile an' sage—another fever antidote—
An' peppermint an' yaller root—I've got to take 'em all.
Sometimes I wish, b'jing! that spring would stay away
till fall.

A FETTERED SOUL

When people's souls is full o' rhyme,
I say it isn't right
To make 'em plow jest all th' time
From early morn till night.
Dad hasn't any feelin' fur
A genius sech as me—
Whoa, haw! Can't you go anywhur
'Cept whur you shouldn't be?

Yea, Buck! Confound mules, anyhow!
That's right! Now bust a tug!
You act as if this here old plow
Was more than you could lug.
I wish you had to bear th' weight
O' tryin' to show pa
That you was born to better fate
Than plowin' dirt. Whoa, haw!

Whoa! Whoa, you lop-eared on'ry mule!
It's hard enough to do
Th' sums in sad affliction's school
Without endurin' you.

A FETTERED SOUL

I hear th' robin's chipper chirp
An' see th' blossoms white—
Why, even our old mongrel purp
Is barkin', "Time to write!"

But if I'd climb Parnassus' mount,
My dad 'd come, I know,
An' say th' place was no account
An' I should plow below.
Us poets has a sorry lot
In this here vale o' tears—
Yea, Buck! Whoa! Who told you to trot?
Doggone your pesky ears!

“AUCTION”

Oh, this was long and long ago—a boy would trudge the
street,

And swing a bell in unison with what he would repeat.
Somebody had an auction sale of stock or household
wares;

The boy would warn the town of it, delighted with the
stares

And curiosity he roused when he went clanging by,
The bell a faithful second to his echo-raising cry:

“Auction! Auction!”

Barefooted, flapping-trousered, not a care upon his heart;
Contented with the world he knew; contented with his
part;

He loitered by the orchard where the bees sought out the
bruise

That told them of the apple with the honey juice to lose;
He shouted to the meadows where the birds went sailing
by,

And heard the dreaming forests wake and send him back
his cry:

“Auction! Auction!”

"AUCTION"

**Oh, that was long and long ago—but still to-day we see
The glory of the sunset on the boy that used to be;
And down the distance of the years the echoes faintly
swell**

**And bring a mellow murmur of his shoutings and his bell.
Why did we auction off the wares we long to-day to hold?
Why did we sell the happiness we did not know was gold?
What is it comes rose-scented from the days that have
gone by**

**Upon the bosom of the breath that bears the boyish cry,
"Auction! Auction!"**

THE BOYHEART

The boyheart! The boyheart! It lies within your breast,
All ready to go leaping when your soul is at its best—
When on the street there comes to you a whistle or a call,
Or but the echo of a song whose happy measures fall
Upon the chords of memory, and rouse them into life
Until they send a surging thrill as rich as drum or fife!

The boyheart! The boyheart! It may be but a rose
That nods in careless glee at one as idly on he goes;
But instantly he sees a street that wanders up and down
Between the sleepy fences of the quiet little town;
Or maybe 'tis a country road where swaying branches
spread
And build an arching canopy of beauty overhead.

The boyheart! The boyheart! The embers in the grate
May paint for one the picture that will bring the thoughts
elate—
A picture of the meadowlands which reach beside the
brook
And blend into a forest where there's many a leafy nook,
Where every tree that waves its arms, and swings and
sweeps and sways
Is wafting shouts and laughter from the boytime summer
days!

THE BOYHEART

The boyheart! The boyheart! Pray that you have it yet!
A-many times its tugging thrills will leave your eyelids
 wet;
A-many times its sudden beats will set your blood aflame
When out of all the other years will come a whispered
 name;
A-many times you'll walk the ways you wandered when a
 lad,
If God has but been good to you and left the heart you
 had.

THE HARVEST APPLE-TREE.

The old harvest apple-tree—
Haunt of boy, and bird, and bee—
With its arms held wide to welcome all the breeze's revelry!

You remember where it grew;
And remember how we knew
All the goodness and the gladness that it held for me
and you.

When the wind was soft and low,
How the leaves swayed to and fro
With the sunshine sifting through them to the dappled
grass below;

And the shimmer and the shade
Were an endless cavalcade
Of the fairy troops of summer to attend us as we played!

In the branches waving high,
We were sailors, and we'd cry
An *Ahoy!* to all the argosies of clouds a-scudding by.
On the grass below we'd weave
All the fancies that deceive
And convince us of the trueness of the land of make-believe.

THE HARVEST APPLE-TREE

And the yellow apples, too—
Sweetened by the dripping dew,
Faintly blushing at the kisses that the teasing sunshine
threw—
Oh, the famed Hesperides
Never yielded such as these,
With a winy tang that coaxed us till we sipped it to the
lees!

The old harvest apple-tree—
Haunt of boy, and bird, and bee—
With its arms that waved a welcome every day to you
and me!
Clear in memory's dim haze,
Happily it swings and sways,
Wafting us a thousand echoes of the cherished yester-
days!



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THE GOOD EXAMPLE

Homer Campbell never gets
No dirt on his hands er face
Ner his clo'es—he never sets
On th' grass, er any place
Where there's leaves, er mud er dust,
An' his pants is never tore—
He's afraid 'at he 'ud bust
If he slid a cellar door!

“Do like Homer Campbell does!”
'At's th' on'y thing I hear.
Seems as if it al'ays wuz
Hollerin' right in my ear.
Homer Campbell's in my class—
Al'ays has his lessons right,
Never gives no one no sass;
Al'ays answers up polite.

“Notice Homer Campbell, boys,”
Says th' teacher, ever' day.
“Homer never causes noise,
Ner disturbs in any way.”

THE GOOD EXAMPLE

Ma says Homer is so good—
If all other childern here
Would jest do like him it would
Fill their parunts full o' cheer.

One time in the Sunday-school
Teacher ast us all what wuz
Give us fer our golden rule.
I says: "Do like Homer does!"
She jest smiled an' looked at me,
Nen said we should all take pride
An' be good as we could be,
Havin' Homer as our guide.

"Do like Homer Campbell does!"
Pa an' ma an' ever' one
Says so much, it seems to buzz
All aroun', an' spoil my fun.
Sometimes I jest sneak away,
Nen they think 'at I'm ashamed.
But I go 'way off, an' say:
"Homer Campbell be dadblamed!"

THE "ROOKIE" EXPLAINS

It ain't that I'm sick; but I want to see
All the ramblin' streets of the good old town,
With the grassy curbs like they used to be
An' the swayin' fences, half-way down.
The old school-house, an' the depot, too,
With the baggage truck where we used to sit
An' watch the trains while they hurried through—
An' war? I had never heard tell of it!

It ain't that I'm sick, just exactly, yet
I'm a-fightin' hard to keep back the blues
When I think of things that I can't forget—
You know how a fellow 'll sometimes muse
Of folks an' the place where he used to be.
An' see things? See 'em! Now, listen. Say!
There's an old town pump, always drippin' free—
I can hear those drops just as plain as day!

It ain't that I'm sick. If I only could
Get among them scenes for an hour or so,
To show that I loved an' I understood
All the good old times of the long ago.

THE "ROOKIE" EXPLAINS

If I only could— Don't you understand?
Or is it a baby soldier's talk?
But there ain't no way to go there by land,
An' home 's too far when a man can't walk.

It ain't that I'm sick. But by night an' day
I can see the stretch of the little street,
An' I hear the shouts of the boys at play,
An' the dusty swish of the runnin' feet;
I can hear the call of the old school bell
An' the bang an' blare of the old home band;
An' I get a whiff of the roses' smell—
But I ain't sick! Can't you understand?

IN THE ATTIC

Up in the attic where mother goes
Is a trunk in a shadowed nook—
A trunk, and its lid she will oft unclose
As if it were a precious book.
She kneels at its side on the attic boards
And tenderly, soft and slow,
She counts all the treasures she fondly hoards—
The things of the long ago.

A yellowing dress, once the sheerest white
That shimmered in joyous pride—
She looks at it now with the girl's delight
That was hers when she stood a bride.
There is a ribbon of faded blue
She keeps with the satin gown;
Buckles and lace—and a little shoe;
Sadly she lays that down.

One lock of hair that is golden still
With the gold of the morning sun;
Yes, and a dolly with frock and frill—
She lifts them all, one by one.

IN THE ATTIC

She lifts them all to her gentle lips,
Up there in the afternoon;
Sometimes the rain from the eaves-trough drips
Tears with her quavered croon.

Up in the attic where mother goes
Is a trunk in a shadowed place—
A trunk—with the scent of a withered rose
On the satin and shoe and lace.
None of us touches its battered lid,
But safe in its niche it stays
Sacred to all that her heart has hid—
Gold of the other days.

THE ROAD TO YESTERDAY

There is a road to yesterday—
A wondrous thoroughfare,
Where wanton breezes idly play
And blossoms scent the air.
It stretches long and far and straight;
It wanders up and down;
It passes many an open gate
And many a little town.

There is a road to yesterday;
The grasses grow beside,
And trees that spread and swing and sway,
And shade the pathway wide.
Its flowers are a goodly sight,
And it goes on and on
And leads to many a starry night
And many a cloudless dawn.

There is a road to yesterday,
And we may trace its gleam
In flecking shade or dancing ray
Upon some little stream;

THE ROAD TO YESTERDAY

Or we may see it, when, with eyes
Half-closed, we hear a song
That calls up many a glad sunrise
And many a twilight long.

There is a road to yesterday,
And each one knows its start—
The portal to this wondrous way
Is held within the heart;
From there the pleasant courses lead
As far as one can see—
It rests on many a golden deed
And many a memory.

SOMEWHERE

Somewhere the roses are brave and red;
And apple blossoms are sweet, and spread
A wistful perfume that scents the day
And clings to zephyrs that croon away
When night comes slowly and bids them stay.
A wondrous fragrance the blossoms bear—
And wouldn't you like to be there?

Somewhere the meadows are stretching green,
As clear as jewels, and soft and clean,
With dandelions in spangled show
That nod and beckon when breezes blow.
Somewhere the meadows— But don't you know
The tone and tang of the bracing air?
And wouldn't you like to be there?

Somewhere there reaches a country road,
With crickets chanting a twilight ode;
And bending branches to paint a shade
Where moonbeams glimmer and gleam and fade,
And will-o'-the-wisps in the distance wade.
Somewhere the fireflies flash and flare—
And wouldn't you like to be there?

SOMEWHERE

Somewhere—you know it; oh, who but holds
A memory that his heart enfolds—
A memory of the leaning trees
And soothing song of the honeybees
And all of the boy-day melodies!
Somewhere you lived in it all—somewhere—
And wouldn't you like to be there?

BORROWIN' THE BABY

Good mornin'. My ma sent me
To ast you how you was,
An' hope you're well—you know 'at is
Th' way she allus does.
My ma, she sez you're strangers,
But then she kind o' thought
She'd like to borry th' baby
'At you folkses has got.

My ma sets by th' window
An' watches you an' him,
An' kind o' smiles an' cries to oncet,
'Cause he's like baby Jim.
Who's Jim? He was *our* baby—
We named him after pa.
Say, can we borry your baby
A little while for ma?

My ma, she sez she wouldn't
Mind if your baby cried—
She sez 'at's music in her ears
Sence little Jim has died.

BORROWIN' THE BABY

She sez she'll be good to him,
An' she'd like a whole lot
If we can borrow th' baby
'At you folkses has got.

“WHY?”

“Why?” He asked it all th’ time—
In th’ mornin’, soon as he
Was awake, he use’ to climb
’Crost th’ bed an’ pester me.
Asked it; asked it! Seemed as though
He could make th’ questions fly.
When he went to sleep, a low
Whisper faded into “Why?”

All th’ whole endurin’ day
He kep’ up his questioning,
Runnin’ up to me to say
“Why was this?” an’ ever’thing!
Why did people have to work?
Why did trees grow up so high?
Looked like we must hire a clerk
To keep up ’ith ev’ry “Why?”

“Why?” I mind th’ times I’ve laughed,
Half-way puzzled, half-way vexed,
Vowin’ he ’ud drive me daft—
Him a-thinkin’ up th’ next!

"WHY?"

Bet they ain't a stone or limb,
Or a star that's in th' sky,
But one time it's started him
On his never-endin' "Why?"

* * * * *

No, he doesn't ask no more.
Sometimes, nights, when mother draws
Down th' blinds an' locks th' door,
I, unthinkin', say: "Because."
Then she turns an' tries to smile
But she breaks it 'ith a sigh;
An' we sit th' long, long while
Wonderin' an' askin' "Why?"

A VEEK PEHINT CHRISTMAS

'Tis a veek pehint Christmas undt all droo der house
Der chiltrens iss keebling so shy like a mouse;
Dey vatch py der vindows to see ven I come,
Undt ven I am in, dey are saying: "Keep mum!"
Chust like I can't hear dem undt like I don't see—
Dose chiltrens iss making Kriss Kingles for me.

Dere's liddle Katrina—she asks me so schweet
If I don't like shlipppers to go by my feet,
Undt vedder id's nicer if dey has some bows
Of ribbon to make dem some style on der toes.
Undt now she iss sewing as hart as can be—
Undt I know she's making Kriss Kingles for me.

Dere's Hans undt his broder—dot Chulius—deir bank
Iss empty of pennies dot use' to go "clank!"
Dey ask me last veeks if I don't dink it's fine
To ged a new pipe for dis old von of mine.
Undt now dey vill visper undt chuckle in glee—
Dose poys, dey are making Kriss Kingles for me.

A VEEK PEHINT CHRISTMAS

'Tis a veek pehint Christmas—undt, Oh, it iss fine
To see all der dricks of dose chiltren of mine,
Undt dink how dose shippers vill feel on my feet,
Undt how dot new pipe vill be bleasant undt schweet.
Undt dey shall haf choost der best kint of a tree
Pecause dey are making Kriss Kingles for me.

THE MOTHER-LOOK

As one whom his mother comforteth.—Isaiah.

You take the finest woman, with th' roses in her cheeks,
An' all th' birds a-singin' in her voice each time she
speaks;

Her hair all black an' gleamin', or a glowin' mass o'
gold—

An' still th' tale o' beauty isn't more th'n half-way told.
There ain't a word that tells it; all description it defies—
Th' mother-look that lingers in a happy woman's eyes.

A woman's eyes will sparkle in her innocence an' fun,
Or snap a warnin' message to th' ones she wants to shun.
In pleasure or in anger there is always han'someness,
But still there is a beauty that was surely made to bless—
A beauty that grows sweeter an' that all but glorifies—
Th' mother-look that sometimes comes into a woman's
eyes.

It ain't a smile, exactly—yet it's brimmin' full o' joy,
An' meltin' into sunshine when she bends above her boy,

THE MOTHER-LOOK

Or girl, when it's a-sleepin', with its dreams told in its
face;

She smooths its hair, an' pets it as she lif's it to its place.
It leads all th' expressions, whether grave, or gay, or
wise—

Th' mother-look that glimmers in a lovin' woman's eyes.

There ain't a picture of it! If there was, they'd have to
paint

A picture of a woman mostly angel an' some saint,
An' make it still be human—an' they'd have to blend the
whole.

There ain't a picture of it, for no one can paint a soul!
No one can paint th' glory comin' straight from para-
dise—

Th' mother-look that lingers in a happy woman's eyes.

THE EMPTY CHAIRS

I tell her it is foolish—but each Thanksgiving Day
She's bound to have the table set in the old-time way,
The little cup and saucer that Henry always had—
That handle has been broken since he was just a tad—
The plate we got for Mollie—the brim is A, B, C's—
I tell ma it is foolish, but her eyes, they look "Please!"
And then somehow or other I've got no more to say
When she gets out the dishes for our Thanksgiving Day.

She gets the little high chair—I've vowed 'most every
year

I'd sell it to somebody, but still it's always here—
The baby used to use it; the baby—that was Rose—
It's always for her children our fattest turkey goes.
We send one to the others; it isn't much to give,
But it's a home touch for them away off where they live.
But I tell ma it's foolish, with us both old and gray,
To set the children's places on each Thanksgiving Day.

I ask a blessing always; there's lots I'd like to ask,
But with those empty places the blessing is a task.
I tell ma not to do it—I'm thinking all the while
How Henry used to argue that handle was in style;

THE EMPTY CHAIRS

And ma says she remembers the way that it was broke.
Both of us laugh about it, but I 'most always choke.
I tell her that it's foolish to set the things that way—
And think we've got the children back home Thanksgiv-
ing Day.

We never eat that dinner. We don't get half-way through
Till ma is in some story of how they used to do;
Of how they used to chatter, and beg for this and that—
And all the time a-looking at each place where they sat.
And then—and then—she's trying to hide a sudden tear
And saying she is thankful that one time they was here.
But still I say it's foolish to have things fixed this way—
To set the children's places on each Thanksgiving Day.

HIS FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL

She lost her little boy to-day;
Her eyes were moist and sweet
And tender, when he went away
To hurry down the street.
She stood there for the longest while
And watched and watched him; then
She said—and tried to force a smile—
“He’ll not come back again.”

Inside the house, her tears would come.
She sank into a chair
And sobbed above the battered drum
And trumpet lying there.
The sunshine stole into the place—
It only made her sad
With thinking of the pretty grace
His baby tresses had.

She minded all his little ways;
She went to see his crib
Up in the attic; then to gaze
At platter, spoon, and bib,

HIS FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL

And all the trinkets he had thought
So fair to look upon—
Each one of them this murmur brought:
“My little boy has gone.”

She wandered through the house all day,
To come on things he'd left,
And Oh, she missed his romping play
And felt herself bereft!
When he came home, with shining eyes,
To tell of school's delight,
She kissed and held him mother-wise
With something of affright.

This is the pain in mothers' hearts
When school-days have begun;
Each knows the little boy departs
And baby-days are done;
Each mother fain would close her ears
And hush the calling bell
For, somehow, in its tone she hears
The sounding of a knell.

HER CHRISTMAS PRAYER

*Mary Mother, be good to him;
Be kind to him that day—
'Twill be the only Christmas time
That he has been away!*

I promised him a world of toys
If he would only stay—
Sure, Heaven's full of little boys
That sing and laugh and play.
But you would know the smile of him
Among a thousand more;
His smile will make all else seem dim
When you call him "Asthere."

Sure, you will know him by his eyes,
That are so sweet and blue,
And deep and clear and very wise—
They read the heart of you.
His hair is golden as the sun;
His curls they are so quaint
They mind you of the halo on
An angel or a saint.

HER CHRISTMAS PRAYER

I promised him a splendid tree,
With candles all aglow.
O Mary Mother, you can see
'Twas me that loved him so.
And surely, surely, you will see
My boy, so sweet and slim—
His eyes are hungering for me
As my eyes are for him.

*Mary Mother, be good to him;
Be kind to him that day.
'Twill be the only Christmas time
That he has been away.*

WHERE HE GOT IT

See dat lamb a-laughin' twell de dimples hide 'is face
Lak dey plumb bewildered foh ter fin' a restin' place!
Ain' dat laugh de greates' dat yo' eveh listen to?
Sweeteh dan de roses w'en dey drippin' full of dew!
Beats de fines' music dat a fiddle evah made!
Des de sweetes' chune dat anybody evah played!
Whah he git dat chuckle, en dat smile dat ripple so?
Git dem f'om 'is mammy! W'y, yo' sholy oughter know!

See dem eyes a-shinin' lak de blue skies ob July—
All de joys ob Hebben des a-beamin' from each eye!
See dem teeth a-gleamin' wid de whites' kin' ob white,
Lak a ray ob moonshine dat is stretch' across de night!
Watch dat chile a-walkin' lak he own de blessed town;
See him do de cake-walk w'ilst he p'omenadin' roun'!
Whah he git dem graces, en 'is eyes, en all de res'?
Git dem f'om 'is mammy, ter be sho'. Yo' might hab
guess'!

Heah dat chile a-talkin'! Des' a-talkin' all de time—
Astin' puzzlin' questions w'en upon mah knee he climb.
Want ter know de reason why I been away last night;
Ast me whah I been ter-day, en is I doin' right;

WHERE HE GOT IT

Ast me foh some money—des a-talkin' right along.
Ain' no chance ter ans'eh w'en he git ter goin' strong.
Whah he git dat—lawzy! W'y, dey ain' no use ter ast!
Git it f'om 'is mammy! Sho', you guess it right at last.

A COMMUNION

The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing 'of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.—The Song of Solomon.

The common kind o' flowers! Lord, you make a lot o' them!

The daisy in the medder is as clean as any gem;
The wild rose in the thicket is the ripest kind o' red—
It's purty, and it's happy—look at how it holds its head!

Them little dutchman's-breeches is a favorite o' mine;
I like to stumble on 'em with my eyes, an' catch their shine;
An', then, the johnny-jump-ups, noddin' soft when I go by,
An' as blue an' glad an' helpful as the ca'm midsummer sky.

The blazin' dogwood blossoms! How they flash along the road—
Come a-bloomin' in a minute, till a feller thinks it's snowed!

A COMMUNION

Lord, the haw-tree holds a sermon that is sent direct from
you;
An' the bendin' cherry branches, an' the elder bushes, too.

There's the perky dandelion bobbin' up so fresh an' bold,
Till the whole endurin' hillside has its polky-dots of
gold;
An' the blossomin' May-apple, hidin' underneath the
trees,
Sends a tinglin' sort o' flavor till it coaxes out the bees.

The common kind o' flowers! Lord, I guess they like to
grow
An' to fill the air with gladness just because you love
them so.
Lord, I try to understand them an' my heart beats in
accord
When I bend an' whisper to 'em: "For this blessing,
thank the Lord!"

DREAMIN' WHILE THE BAND PLAYS

Oh, when the old home band turns out, and plays its
rippin' airs,

I'd rather listen to the tunes than be 'most anywheres;

I'd rather let my fancy go, and drift into a daze

A-listenin' to that old band, and dreamin' while it plays!

When they bring out some ringin' march that's full o'
fire and vim,

Where the bass drum keeps a-throbbin' in a cadence gruff
an' grim,

An' the trombone 's just a-roarin' till the tuba's drowned
out,

I dream that I'm a soldier, an' I hear the battle shout!

Dreamin' while the band plays! If they try a serenade,
Or a liltin' sort o' love song, where the music seems afraid
To come right out an' sing its piece, but sort o' hangs its
head

An' whispers low an' mellow till you can't tell what it
said;

DREAMIN' WHILE THE BAND PLAYS

When the cornet player twists his horn an' puts the
tremolo
On every note he draws out long, an' makes it sob—you
know,
I get to dreamin' of a girl an' holdin' of her hand,
An' kind of actin' foolish—but I blame it on the band!

Dreamin' while the band plays! When the program's
nearly done,
An' the leader holds his pointer up an' says, "Play num-
ber one,"
Then they play a piece that's purtier than any song or
pome,
For they're tuggin' at your heart-strings when they bring
out *Home, Sweet Home*.
An' the bass drum sort o' rumbles, an' the tenor drum re-
plies
With a tender little tappin' like the rain-drops from the
skies,
An' all the other players puts a tear in every note—
I wake up from my dreamin' an' I have to clear my
throat!

“CROOKED JAKE”

Used to call him “Crooked Jake”

When he come here first.

My! You’d think his back ’u’d break—

He was bent the worst!

Legs was crooked; arms was, too;

Mouth was in a twist

Like a grin stuck on ’ith glue;

Hand tied in a fist.

Laws! Us fellers ’u’d tantalize

“Crooked Jake” an’ his solemn eyes.

Solemn eyes? Say, that was queer.

Wa’n’t no laugh in them;

They was peaceful like, an’ clear—

Clear as any gem.

Us boys use’ to tag along

When he’d wobble past,

Jokin’ him. I know ’twas wrong—

Found it out at last.

Yes, it give us a good su’prise—

“Crooked Jake” an’ his solemn eyes.

"CROOKED JAKE"

Gen'ral Sherman one day went
Through here on the cars.
"Crooked Jake," all warped and bent,
He was there. My stars!
Sherman, he reached for his hand,
Give it one long shake;
"Best man was in my command!
Glad to see you, Jake!"
All th' glory o' Paradise
Seemed to shine in them solemn eyes.

Seems 'at Jake in some big fight
Where they took our flag
Sailed right in 'ith all his might—
Fetched it back—a rag!
Shot to pieces—been crooked since;
Wabbles in his gait—
Not a step but makes him wince,
But his fame's on straight.

* * * * *

Some of us tried to apologize,
But Jake just looked, 'ith his solemn eyes!

THE ALBUM

Yes, sir, it's kind o' heavy—it's a hefty sort o' book,
An' I get pestered often when I try to work this hook,
Or clasp, or snap, or thingumbob 'at holds the covers
shet—

It bothered me when it was new, an' I hain't learnt it yet.
There, now! You'd never pick that one for me, in all th'
worl',

An' this one here is mother like she was when jest a girl.

That's Sallie—married, le' me see, th' fall o' sixty-eight,
A feller name o' Bemus Potts 'at sold a patent gate;
An' this is Amos Ransum—'course you've heard a heap
o' Ame,

He's been three times in Congress an' took on a lot o'
fame.

Them's Mollie's twins—she knows 'em both apart by that
there curl—

An'—well, back here is mother like she was when jest a
girl.

Then here's a passel of 'em—lots o' uncles, aunts an'
friends,

But I ain't like these people that jest fools aroun' an'
spends

THE ALBUM

Their time a-scannin' photygrafts to see who favors who;
Oh, yes, I mos' forgot this one—right here there's one o'
you.

But here it opens easiest—I like this one, you see,
This picture here o' mother—jest the girl she used to be.

A old-time lookin' picture, with her hair fixed up that
way—

A waterfall, they called it—but 'twas on'y yesterday
That I was jokin' mother—it's a way I have, you know,
An' told her that th' wrinkles was th' laughs o' long ago,
An' that her eyes—I 'member how they set my heart
a-whirl—

Yes, this one here is mother like she was when jest a girl.

"TIDDLE-IDDLE-IDDLE-IDDLE-BUM! BUM!"

When our town band gets on the square
On concert night you'll find me there.
I'm right beside Elijah Plumb,
Who plays th' cymbals an' bass drum;
An' next to him is Henry Dunn,
Who taps the little tenor one.
I like to hear our town band play,
But, best it does, I want to say,
Is when they tell a tune's to come
With

"Tiddle-iddle-iddle-iddle-

Bum-Bum!"

O' course, there's some that likes the tunes
Like *Lily Dale* an' *Ragtime Coons*;
Some likes a solo or duet
By Charley Green—B-flat cornet—
An' Ernest Brown—th' trombone man.
(An' they can play, er no one can);

"TIDDLE-IDDLE-IDDLE-IDDLE-BUM! BUM!"

But it's the best when Henry Dunn
Lets them there sticks just cut an' run,
An' 'Lijah says to let her hum
With

**"Tiddle-iddle-iddle-iddle-
Bum-Bum!"**

I don't know why, ner what's the use
O' havin' that to interduce
A tune—but I know, as fer me
I'd ten times over ruther see
Elijah Plumb chaw with his chin,
A-gettin' ready to begin,
While Henry plays that roll o' his
An' makes them drumsticks fairly sizz,
Announcin' music, on th' drum,
With

**"Tiddle-iddle-iddle-iddle-
Bum-Bum!"**

SAREPTY BROWN

Th' purtiest woman in this town
Is little old Sarepty Brown.

I know she's wrinkled, gray an' bent—
An' some folks sez she gossips, too;
She knows who's come an' knows who's went
An' what they did or didn't do—
But, say, when ma was sick that spring
With typhoid fever, S'repty Brown,
She come an' shouldered ever'thing.
When ma got up, w'y *she* was down.

An' when Mort Peters' little girl
Got sick that time, an' like to died—
(Yes, sir, Mis' Peters'd clipped a curl
To 'member her, an' cried an' cried)—
Sarepty Brown, she nursed all night
An' day, an' night an' day again,
An' never rested, when she might
'A' sort o' idled now an' then.

SAREPTY BROWN

An' that's the way, where folks is sick
Or sorrowful, or in distress,
Sarepty Brown, through thin an' thick
Can find some way their lives to bless.
An' people sez 'at when she bends
An' holds her hand against their brow
It seems like when a angel sends
A healin' balm to cure, somehow.

I ain't no preacher; got no creed;
Ner articles o' faith; but, say,
God knew what all us folks 'd need
An' sent Sarepty Brown this way.
I can't see any wrinkled face
Or faded hair; when I see her
I see th' golden glow o' grace
Right straight f'um glory, I do, sir!

Th' purtiest woman in this town
Is little old Sarepty Brown.

THE OLD-TIME FIDDLER

*The old gray hoss is dead in the wilderness,
Dead in the wilderness,
Dead in the wilderness;
The old gray hoss is dead in the wilderness,
Down in Alabam'.*

He used to take his fiddle with a loving sort of touch,
And hold it with caresses where some other folks would
clutch;

He pressed it to his shoulder and it nestled at his chin;
He stroked the strings with tenderness before he would
begin.

“The Old Gray Hoss!” He’d pat his foot and bend and
sway and bow

The while you wound the figures of the dances to and fro.

“The Monkey Chased the Weasel,” “Captain Jinks,” and
“Money Musk,”

And “White Gal Up the Mountain”—how they echoed
through the dusk!

He knew no pizzicato grace—he only “picked the
strings”—

But even yet the melody in soft remembrance sings.

THE OLD-TIME FIDDLER

We see his jolly smile again, and shaking, frosty head
When he would romp the measures of "The Old Gray
Hoss is Dead."

Sometimes—you mind how he would sit, and look away—
away—
And sweep the bow across the strings and let the music
stray
Until it held the gladness of a dreamy afternoon—
The vagrant chirpings of the birds, and bees' idyllic
croon;
The murmurs of the little brook that plashed its way
along
And never kissed a pebble without breaking into song!

The gray-haired fiddler! Ignorant of rules or pose or
art—
And yet his was the magic that could reach around your
heart;
His was the mystic mastery of touch and time and tone
That made you hear the fairy horns at evening gaily
blown.
And Oh, the swooping swing of his; and how the music
swam
When he would play "The Old Gray Hoss that Died in
Alabam'!"



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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

“GOOD MORNIN’ ”

He always said “Good mornin’ ”
An’ emphasized the “Good,”
As if he’d make it happy
For each one if he could.
“Good mornin’ !” just “Good mornin’ ”
To every one he met;
He said it with a twinkle
Nobody could forget.

He always said “Good mornin’ ,”
An’ people use’ to say
That one o’ his Good-mornin’s
Clung to you all the day,
An’ made you always cheerful
From thinkin’ of the sound—
It always was “Good mornin’ ”
Long as he was around.

He always said “Good mornin’ ”—
An’, glad an’ happy-eyed,
Them were the words he whispered
The mornin’ that he died.
Them were the words he whispered
As cheerful as he could—
An’ I believe the angels
They emphasized the “Good.”

"SINCE I CAME OVER"

"Since I came over"—

Oft she stood

**Her red, rough hands in straining clasp
As though in some strange way she would
Find some rich treasure in her grasp;
Find something tangible to clutch
And hold, and know it for her own—
Out of the things she had loved much,
Out of the days that she had known.**

"Since I came over"—

And she smiled;

**A light came to her listless eyes
When, like a joyous, care-free child—
In whose heart naught of sorrow lies,
She told us of the paths she knew
And sang small fragments of a song—
Some little strain of "eyes so blue"
That in her mind had lingered long.**

"SINCE I CAME OVER"

"Since I came over"—

She would tell

**Of days that were before she came;
Of broad fields that she loved so well;
Of roses bursting into flame;
Of sunny day and starry night—
Then, as a song in silence dies,
The gleaming of the happy light
Went swiftly from her wistful eyes.**

Since she "came over"—

Ah, and you

**And I, and all of us have known
The heartache in the farewell view
Of some land that we called our own.
We know how many isles there be
Of which for aye we are bereft.
Across the sea of memory
What happy lands we all have left!**

A CRY FROM THE CONSUMER

Grasshoppers roam the Kansas fields and eat the tender
grass—

A trivial affair, indeed, but what then comes to pass?
You go to buy a panama, or any other hat;
You learn the price has been advanced a lot because of
that.

A glacier up in Canada has slipped a mile or two—
A little thing like this can boost the selling price of glue.
Occurrences so tragic always thrill me to the core;
I hope and pray that nothing ever happens any more.

Last week the peaceful Indians went a-searching after
scalps,

And then there was an avalanche 'way over in the Alps;
These diametric happenings seem nothing much, but
look—

We had to add a dollar to the wages of the cook.
The bean-crop down at Boston has grown measurably
less,

And so the dealer charges more for goods to make a
dress.

Each day there is some incident to make a man feel sore,
I'm on my knees to ask that nothing happens any more.

A CRY FROM THE CONSUMER

It didn't rain in Utah and it did in old Vermont—
Result: it costs you fifty more to take a summer's jaunt;
Upon the plains of Tibet some tornadoes took a roll—
Therefore the barons have to charge a higher price for
coal.

A street-car strike in Omaha has cumulative shocks—
It boosted huckleberries up to twenty cents a box.
No matter what is happening it always finds your door—
Give us a rest! Let nothing ever happen any more.

Mosquitoes in New Jersey bite a magnate on the wing—
Result: the poor consumer feels that fierce mosquito's
sting:

The 'skeeter's song is silenced, but in something like an
hour

The grocers understand that it requires a raise in flour.
A house burns down in Texas and a stove blows up in
Maine,

Ten minutes later breakfast foods in prices show a gain.
Effects must follow causes—which is what I most de-
plore;

I hope and pray that nothing ever happens any more.

AN ODYSSEY OF K'S

I've traveled up and down this land
And crossed it in a hundred ways,
But somehow can not understand
These towns with names chock-full of K's.
For instance, once it fell to me
To pack my grip and quickly go—
I thought at first to Kankakee
But then remembered Kokomo.
"Oh, Kankakee or Kokomo,"
I sighed, "just which I do not know."

Then to the ticket man I went—
He was a snappy man, and bald,
Behind an iron railing pent—
And I confessed that I was stalled.
"A much K'd town is booked for me,"
I said. "I'm due to-morrow, so
I wonder if it's Kankakee
Or if it can be Kokomo."
"There's quite a difference," growled he,
"Twixt Kokomo and Kankakee."

AN ODYSSEY OF K'S

He spun a yard of tickets out—
The folded kind that makes a strip
And leaves the passenger in doubt
When the conductor takes a clip.
He flipped the tickets out, I say,
And asked: "Now, which one shall it be?
I'll sell you tickets either way—
To Kokomo or Kankakee."
And still I really did not know—
I thought it might be Kokomo.

At any rate, I took a chance;
He struck his stamp-machine a blow
And I, a toy of circumstance,
Was ticketed for Kokomo.
Upon the train I wondered still
If all was right as it should be.
Some mystic warning seemed to fill
My mind with thoughts of Kankakee.
The car-wheels clicked it out: "Now, he
Had better be for Kankakee!"

Until at last it grew so loud,
At some big town I clambered out
And elbowed madly through the crowd,
Determined on the other route.

AN ODYSSEY OF K'S

The ticket-agent saw my haste;
 "Where do you wish to go?" cried he.
I yelled: "I have no time to waste—
 Please fix me up for Kankakee!"
Again the wheels, now fast, now slow,
Clicked: "Ought to go to Kokomo!"

Well, anyhow, I did not heed
 The message that they sent to me.
I went, and landed wrong indeed—
 Went all the way to Kankakee.
Then, in a rush, I doubled back—
 Went wrong again, I'd have you know.
There was no call for me, alack!
 Within the town of Kokomo.

And then I learned, confound the luck,
I should have gone to *Keokuk!*

"WHERE A ROSE IS AT"

Deep in the slums, one hot, hot day
A little girl was at her play—
A little girl with tousled hair
And grimy hands, and feet all bare.
There, in the baking, barren street,
She sang—and oh, her voice was sweet,
To one who, halting where she sat,
Heard: "I know where a rose is at!"

She pointed down an alley dim
Where slattern women, coarse and grim,
Were bandying strange laugh and call—
And there, close to the blackened wall,
A brave, brave rose was clambering.
What wonder that the tot could sing—
That she in accents shrill and flat
Sang: "I know where a rose is at!"

The stranger caught the rare perfume
That floated from the ruddy bloom—
The one lone blossom with its cheer—
And sighed: "There are two roses here.

"WHERE A ROSE IS AT"

Each plays its good, unconscious part,
And one rich rose is in your heart."
The child, not understanding that,
Crooned: "I know where a rose is at."

'Tis so. We may be walled about
With fretting fear and clinging doubt,
But somewhere in the wreck and ruck
A rose of hope, with sturdy pluck,
Is climbing, climbing through the night
To show us which way comes the light.
There may be gloom—but what of that
If we "know where a rose is at"?

MAIN STREET

It's none of your crowded city streets,
Where the rush and bustle are,
And the wave of constant movement beats
Through the dust and smoke afar.
It saunters in with a peaceful air
And it slowly passes through—
This cheerful, hurryless thoroughfare
With its seeming "Howdy-do."

It stops where the roses blandly nod
Through the quaint old garden gate,
Then goes with a placid, patient plod
Where the sidewalks hold it straight.
It halts again at the public square
For an unbegrudging rest
And a friendly chat with the corners there,
For each cross-street is a guest.

Then lazily to the blacksmith shop,
Where it has to pause once more
To see the blazing cinders drop
From the forge just by the door.

MAIN STREET

From there to the bridge across the brook,
To hear what the ripples say;
Then on to the walnut-shaded nook
Where the sages sit all day.

Main Street goes on with a calm content
To the summit of the hill,
Then yields to the soothing blandishment
Of the country-side, all still.
It rambles out where the meadows spread
And the soft green grasses creep,
And there, on a blossom-spangled bed,
Main Street has gone to sleep.

SHO'LY! SHO'LY!

Oh, de night am dahk, but de day gwine dawn—

Sho'ly! Sho'ly!

De good times come when de bad times gone—

Sho'ly! Sho'ly!

En dey ain' no use fo' ter moan en sigh,

Er ter vex yo'se'f oveh whut gone by,

'Cause de echo come when de singin' die—

Sho'ly! Sho'ly!

Oh, de paff am long en de paff am rough—

Sho'ly! Sho'ly!

But yo' gwine git froo ef yo' walk enough—

Sho'ly! Sho'ly!

No use ter weep when de wo'ld go wrong—

Hit's bes' ter sing, ef yo' knows er song;

Hit he'ps yo' feets when yo' walk erlong—

Sho'ly! Sho'ly!

Oh, de night am dahk, but de stahs dey shine—

Sho'ly! Sho'ly!

En de light dey mek—hit am yo's en mine—

Sho'ly! Sho'ly!

En de paff am long en de hill am high,

But yo' cain't go up hit onless yo' try,

En de good times come bresh de bad times by—

Sho'ly! Sho'ly!

THE BAPTIZING OF SISTER CAROLINE

Dey babtize sistah Ca'line—
Dey wash huh sins erway.
Dey ain' no one in dish yere town
Dat gwine fergit dat day.
Dey babtize sistah Ca'line—
She weigh th'ee hunned poun',
En pahson Po'teh hatter swim
Er else he sho'ly drown.

Dey babtize sistah Ca'line—
She say she full er grace.
De sinnahs 'low she fohmed er trust
Ef so be dat de case.
She walk inter de watch—
Ah sho'ly had ter laugh—
En when dey finish wif de wu'k
Dey on'y babtize half.

Dey babtize sistah Ca'line—
She des so thick en wide
Dey hatter tek huh in erg'in
En do de othel side.
Dey babtize sistah Ca'line—
She shout she done been save'—
But pahson Po'teh's hat float off
On top de tidal wave.

UNC' MOSE'S RECKONIN'S

De Lawd mek black en de Lawd mek white;
He mek de day en He mek de night;
He mek de wrong en He mek de right—
I reckon He knowed!

I reckon He knowed, chile,
Des whut He do!
He mek de teahs, but all de while
He plannin' de laugh en plannin' de smile—
I reckon He knowed, chile,
Des whut He do!

De Lawd mek joy, en de Lawd mek woe;
He mek de triles dat fret yo' so,
En He mek de road dat yo' gotter go—
I reckon He knowed.

I reckon He knowed, chile,
Des whut He do!
He mek de stones dat hu't yo' feet,
But He coaxin' de roses, red en sweet—
I reckon He knowed, chile,
Des whut He do!

UNC' MOSE'S RECKONIN'S

De Lawd mek dahk, but He mek de mohn;
He mek de rose en' He mek de tho'n;
He mek us all—des sho's yo' bo'n—
I reckon He knowed!

I reckon He knowed, chile,
Des whut He do!
He know whut bes' fo' yo' en me,
En I reckon He see whut we cain't see—
I reckon He knowed, chile,
Des whut He do!

'N'ER YALLER DAWG

Doan' wan' no house wid er mahble flo'
Ner er big brass knob on de big front do',
But Ah wan' dat place whar Ah useter live,
By de ol' big road whah de white folks driv—
Wid er 'tater patch en er mule en hawg—
'N'er yaller dawg.

Ef Ah shet mah eyes Ah kin see de bloom
Er de rose dat clomb pas' de settin'-room;
Rag cyahpet laid on de hahd pine boa'ds,
En de ol' well-sweep en de drinkin' go'ds,
En de fiahplace wid de big backlog—
'N'er yaller dawg.

En de bacon sizz in de fryin' pan
W'ilst de hoe-cake wait in de ashes—Man!
Ah tell yo' now ef Ah had mah way
Ah'd be back dah 'fo' ernurrer day.
En Ah'd listen nights ter de chunin' frog—
'N'er yaller dawg.

Oh, dey ain' no home dat am funnish' right
'Dout er yaller dawg foh ter please de sight—
Des er yaller dawg dat er frien' plumb th'oo
En kin wag he tail in er "Howdy-do!"
So Ah honin' now foh er mule en hawg—
'N'er yaller dawg.

AUNTY'S OFF DAYS

Some days shaddered ef de sun do shine—
Yo' hunts fo' things dat yo' des cain' fin':
Yo' brek de glass en de chany plates;
Yo' feets dey draig lak dey hunned-weights;
De mis'ry come twell hit ben' yo' back;
En' yo' hoodooed den, fo' er suttan fac'—
 Dem's de days
 W'en de bread won' raise.

No use tryin' fo' ter do things right—
Yo' wu'k en projic' wid yo' main en might,
But grease-spots spattuhs de kitchen flo',
En dem fool peddlehs dey poun' de do'
En tek yo' 'tention, en fo' yo' tu'ns
De stew biles oveh en de pies dey bu'ns.
 Dem's de days
 W'en de bread won' raise.

Sco'ch yo' fingehs en yo' taih yo' dress;
Hab mo' trouble dan yo' evah guess!
Missus scoldin' 'case she wait an hou';
Butteh ransomed, en de cream gone sou'.

AUNTY'S OFF DAYS

Mo' yo' struggles, w'y, de day grows wuss—
Lose mah 'ligion, an Ah wants ter cuss!
Dem's de days
W'en de bread won' raise.

No use ter try, en dey no use ter fret—
Dat bread des sot, en hit gwine stay set!
Bes' be patient w'ilst de troubles pass
En ax de Mastuh sen' tuh-morrer fas'!
Some days shadded ef de sun do shine,
En dey sho'ly tryin' ter de peace er min'.
Blame dem days
W'en de bread won' raise!

“WAIT TWELL HIT COMES”

Ain' no use to worry oveh whut is gwine ter be—
All de things whut is, is trile enough fo' yo' en me.
Whut de good er frazzlin' en pesterin' yo' min'?
Ain' dey been enough er dat in whut yo' lef' behin'?
Lawsy, people! Whut's ter come, hit got ter git hyuh
fus'—

Mebbe hit be betteh;

Mebbe hit be wuss—

Wait twell hit comes.

Mekkin' double trouble w'en yo' trouble trouble so—
W'en yo' trouble trouble 'fo' she knockin' at de do'!
Gittin' in er trimble w'en yo' think er yeah erhead—
Wuss'n goin' hongry w'en yo' got yo' meat en bread.
How we know de lessons dat er waitin' yit fo' us?

Mebbe dey'll be betteh;

Mebbe dey'll be wuss—

Wait twell dey comes.

Never was er shadder 'less hit laughin' at de sun
'Ca'se hit tek de sunshine ter mek shade ernough fo' one.
Walkin' in de big road, whut de use in raisin' groans
'Ca'se erroun' de ben' yo' think yo' gwine fall oveh
stones?

"WAIT TWELL HIT COMES"

How yo' know ef good times ain' er-kickin' up de dus'?
Mebbe dey'll be betteh;
Mebbe dey'll be wuss—
Wait twell dey comes.

Lookin' atter trouble des lak peekin' ter er stah
Out er one dese tellumscopes—it isn' half ez fah,
Ner isn' half ez shiny—en yo' mek hit biggah still—
Same way squinchin' down de road—hit look lak mos'ly
hill!

Gracious mahstehs! Whut's ter come, hit got to git hyuh
fus'!

Mebbe hit be betteh;
Mebbe hit be wuss—
Wait twell hit comes.

LI'L BLACK HAN'S

Li'l black han's—dey neveh still;
All time pullin' de chahs erroun',
Playin' drum on de window pane—
Ain' no stoppin' fo' "Hesh!" er frown—
Drag mah skirts 'twell I cain't walk.
Astin' mammy ter "Tek me, do!"
Grab de broom w'en I's gwine sweep—
Mah house-wu'kkin' is neveh th'oo.

Li'l black han's—dey brek de plates;
Slam de skillet erlong de flo';
Knock dat clock fum de chimbley-piece
Twell hit hasn' no tick no mo';
Pull mah vines in summah-time;
Mek dirt spots on de whitewash wall—
Always fin'in' de mischief place
Sence de day dat she lunt ter crawl.

Li'l black han's—dey neveh stop
Losin' daddy's ol' pipes en things;
Droppin' bread on de pahloh flo'—
Lawd, de muss dem li'l han's brings!

LI'L BLACK HAN'S

Li'l black han's—dey moughty sweet
W'en dey pattin' po' mammy's cheek
W'en I's tiah'd fum mah day's wu'k;
Dey mo' soothin' dan ef dey speak.

Li'l black han's—dey still ter-day!
Folded still in de bestes' room,
Holdin' lilies es peaceful lak,
Des es if dey had pick' de bloom.
Li'l black han's! I min' yo' tricks!
Hyuh's de el'phunts dat yo' drawed.
Li'l black han's! Come back en vex
Yo' po' mammy ergain! My Lawd!

MAH OL' PIPE

Ah laks mah pipe. W'en de wu'k am th'oo
En de dishes put erway
En Ah ain' got no mo' things ter do
Twell dey come ernurrer day,
Den Ah git mah cohncob pipe dat lie
On de back po'ch windsill,
En Ah watch de stahses in de sky
W'en de night am cool en still.

Ah laks mah pipe. W'en de smoke cuhl sof'
Erbout mah ol' brack haid
Den hit tek mah min' ter er place way off—
Ter de time dat long, long daid;
En mah haht git light, en mah feets does, too,
W'en Ah watch dat silveh moon,
En de smoke does figgehs th'oo en th'oo
Lak hit dancin' ter er chune.

Ah laks mah pipe. Ah kin hyuh Unc' Mose
In de big camp-meetin' time
W'en de 'zohteh shoutin' out de woes
Ef de sinneh fail ter climb;



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MAH OL' PIPE

En den, sometimes, w'en de smoke am sweet
I kin git de jasmine smell,
En de roses, too; en Ah hyuh de beat
Er de ol' plantation bell.

Ah laks mah pipe. W'en de night-time come
Den de back po'ch steps am mine,
En mah pipe hit sing, en croon, en hum
Er de days so faih en fine,
W'en de li'l' brack chilluns clomb mah knee—
En Ah sit, en smoke, en sit,
Twell de pipe bu'n out—den de night, ter me,
Grow dahk, en dahkeh yit!

A SONG FOR FLAG DAY

Your flag and my flag,
And how it flies to-day
In your land and my land
And half a world away!
Rose-red and blood-red
The stripes for ever gleam;
Snow-white and soul-white—
The good forefathers' dream;
Sky-blue and true blue, with stars to gleam aright—
The gloried guidon of the day; a shelter through the
night.

Your flag and my flag!
And, oh, how much it holds—
Your land and my land—
Secure within its folds!
Your heart and my heart
Beat quicker at the sight;
Sun-kissed and wind-tossed—
Red and blue and white.
The one flag—the great flag—the flag for me and you—
Glorified all else beside—the red and white and blue!

A SONG FOR FLAG DAY

Your flag and my flag!
To every star and stripe
The drums beat as hearts beat
And fifers shrilly pipe!
Your flag and my flag—
A blessing in the sky;
Your hope and my hope—
It never hid a lie!

Home land and far land and half the world around,
Old Glory hears our glad salute and ripples to the sound!

THE CALL OF THE DRUM

All faint and far-away I hear
The calling of the drum.
Its rhythmic thrumming, drawing near,
Is ever pleading: "Come!"
The colors are waving—
My heart throbs with craving—
As nearer
And clearer,
And louder
And prouder,
Its melody grows as the sound comes and goes:
"Come! Come!"
Is the call of the drum.

Now brave and grand, and near at hand,
I hear the calling drum.
The flag, by gallant breezes fanned,
Is beckoning: "Oh, come!
We'll rush to the clamor
Of strife, with its glamour!"

THE CALL OF THE DRUM

And swelling,
And telling
The story
Of glory,
The drum sings in glee as it passes by me.
"Come! Come!"
Is the call of the drum.

Still faint and far-away I hear
The ever-calling drum;
Now singing low, now ringing clear
Is its insistent "Come!"
With tones sweet and hollow
It lures me to follow.
Far away,
Through the day
It calls me—
Enthralls me—
The lilt of its beating my heart is repeating.
"Come! Come!"
Is the call of the drum.

BEYOND THE HILLS

"I can hear the drums as the army comes
From beyond the hills," he said,
And he leaned and smiled like a happy child
As he shook his snowy head.
And he clutched his cane while the far refrain
Came in murmurs to his ears;
But they whispered low: "He has dreamed it so,
And it is no drum he hears."

"I can hear the fife as it leaps with life,
And the drums roll madly, too,"
Was the old man's sigh, as with kindling eye
He would hum the war-songs through.
"It is Jimmy Shea—that is how he'd play
When the road was hard and long;
And it's Billy's drum that is calling, 'Come!'
As it keeps time with the song."

And his fingers slim beat a tattoo grim
On the stout arm of the chair,
While his lips grew stern and his eyes would burn
With the fire that once was there.

BEYOND THE HILLS

"Oh, the bugle-call, and the drums and all!"
He would say. "Their music fills
All the night and day; I can hear them play
In the march beyond the hills.

"I can hear the drums, and the army comes
From beyond the hills," he said.
With his eyes aglow he saluted slow
As he touched his snowy head.
Then his eyes were closed as if he but dozed,
And his day of days had dawned,
For the low drum-beat had lured his feet
To the hills—and far beyond.

THE WOUNDED FLAGS

The wounded flags! They bear them
Aloft to-day in pride—
The living ones, who share them
Alike with those who died.
The flags that faintly flutter
In cadence with the drum,
As though they sought to utter
Their joy that peace has come.

The wounded flags! We hold them
. Far dearer than the rest;
Close to our hearts we fold them—
These flags by tatters blest;
The flags with shot-holes gaping
That tell their tales of strife—
To-day they're gently draping
The ones who cling to life.

The wounded flags! We hail them
And revel in each hue.
Though age and time may pale them
And red blend into blue—
Though all grow dark and duller,
Yet still in every part
We see the living color
That thrills the nation's heart.

A STREET INCIDENT

He came with lagging step along the busy, crowded way;
His eyes were wan and weary, and his hair was thin and
gray;
His shoulders bent beneath the weight of years of pa-
tient toil;
An armless sleeve and badge of bronze told of war's grim
turmoil.
He came with lagging steps until he heard a lively
thrum—
The rattle of a war-tune from a busy fife and drum.

He stopped to watch the players as they marched along
the street—
The shrilling of the fife was coaxing out the drum's swift
beat.
The Girl I Left Behind Me was the swinging song they
played,
And as he stood and listened, from his eyes went all the
shade;
His shoulders straightened quickly; his head rose firm
and proud,
And he looked far and far away beyond the heedless
crowd.

A STREET INCIDENT

He turned and went his way again with steady, sturdy
stride—

In tune and time to that old song his soldier-feet replied;
His hand swung gallantly, as though it rested on a
sword—

Ah, who can know what memories were in those drum-
beats stored!

What vibrant echoes of the past came rushing to his
brain

When he walked "with the boys" again to that old war-
refrain!

THE MAKING OF AN ARMY

Men are not born to the fighting; men are not bred to the sword;

Only for God and their country have men to the battle-front poured.

Not in the clanging of armor; not in the lilt of the drum,
But in the call of their country do men hear the terrible
"Come!"

Then rise the men of a nation, men of a purpose and will—

Then do they rise with a light in their eyes, but not as men go to the kill.

Men are not led with a halter, like to a reasonless beast;
Men are not lured by a bauble to add to the carrion feast;
Only when home and their country speak in the thunder of God

Men walk, with faces illumined, the paths that their fathers have trod.

Then, in the shrill of the bullet; then, in the war-trumpet's song,

In the pipe of the fife leap the soldiers to life—ready and gallant and strong.

THE MAKING OF AN ARMY

Let but an enemy's cannon threaten the strength of our
walls;
Let but the hand of a traitor scatter disgrace in our
halls—
Then will the clamor of bugles over the nation be
dinned,
Then will the banners of battle snap in the hiss of the
wind,
Then will the hearth be deserted, then will the marts all
grow bare—
For the call will have pealed through the town and the
field, and the men that are wanted are there!

Men are not born to the fighting! Tell it again and
again.
Men who go down to the killing—pawns they may be,
but not men.
Only when God and the country sound us the long rally
roll,
Thrill us with drummings of conscience—comes then the
blazing of soul!
Comes then the knowledge of duty; come all the purposes
high—
Then come the men from the hill and the glen to put on
their armor and die!

THE OLD BUGLE

There on the wall it hangs, with dented curves and battered mouth,
As though it fought the song of war it shrilled across the South,
As though the blasts of wrath it blew had clutched it in a grasp
That left the lasting finger-prints ere it released the clasp.
There, on the wall, it hangs to-day—a token of Time's lapse—
For now it knows no other song than that sweet one of "Taps."

The bent and battered bugle that has sent its thrilling call
Until a thousand men have hurled themselves against a wall—
Against a wall of bayonets—of bayonets and flame—
And leaped into the charge as if the bugle called each name!
There, on the wall, it hangs to-day between the soldier caps,
And in its rusting throat there is no other song than "Taps."

THE OLD BUGLE

Once, sharp and shrill, it burnt and blared from mouth-
piece out to bell
With strident sound and stinging strains, the startling
song of hell!
Oft, ringing rampantly, it sang in tone and voice elate
In clearest, keenest melody, the rhapsody of hate.
Yet now it hangs there peacefully, and sings but when
the gaps
In thinning ranks call for the sad and sweet old song of
"Taps."

And when they take the bugle down to play above the
mound,
No soldier heart but quicker beats when comes the well-
known sound;
No soldier mind but travels once again the distant ways
That loom anew in memory, though dimming in the haze.
There, on the wall, it hangs to-day—a token of Time's
lapse—
And now it knows no other song than that sweet one of
"Taps."

JUST A SOLDIER

Just a soldier lying dead, with a medal on his breast;
Just a boy who kept his courage to the ending of his
quest.

And the bugle-song is mellow with the melody of sleep
While the muffled drum is thrumming in a measure slow
and deep,—

For it's honor for the soldier, and it's laurels for his
head,

And it's praises for his daring—when the soldier's lying
dead.

Just a soldier lying dead—and the carpings have an end;
When he fell upon the altar every critic was his friend.
With the folded flag about him, and the medal gleaming
there,

Then the praise is quick in coming, and the soldier has
his share—

For it's honor for the soldier when he dies beside his gun,
And it's medals for his coffin—when the soldier's work is
done.

JUST A SOLDIER

Just a soldier lying dead—with his trappings at his side;
And we come to look upon him, slow of step and heavy-
eyed;
Come to clasp the badge of honor on his faded service
coat;
Come to hear the bugle sighing in its saddest, softest
note;
And it's honor for the soldier, with a medal brightly
new,
And it's eulogy and plaudit, when he's done what he
can do.

Just a soldier lying dead—honor rushes to him then;
Come the men with brush and chisel; come the pencil and
the pen.
Yet the comrades of the soldier hold the country in their
debt—
While they live, the praise and medal are so easy to for-
get.
Where the flag of glory ripples in the whisper of the
breeze,
Where the clamoring of battle sends an echo o'er the
seas,
We may find the living reasons for a country's hope and
pride
Just as we have found the medal for the soldier who has
died.

HIS LAST MARCH

“Bring the good old bugle, boys, we’ll sing another song!”

He heard the far-off chorus as his comrades marched along;

He heard the clank of saber, and the jangling bit and spur,

The rumbling of the cannon where his shouting mess-mates were;

He heard the hurried hoofbeats of the horses mettlesome;

And high above he saw the flag that beckoned him: “Oh, come!”

He saw them swing along the road—not graybeards slow and bent.

Ah, no! He saw the boyish ranks of his old regiment.

With rhythmic tread it held its line, with fifers piping shrill;

He saw the ragged colors, that were waving to him still;

And calling—calling—calling, came the rolling of the drum:

“Fall in! Fall in for dress parade! The ranks are waiting. Come!”

HIS LAST MARCH

The line wheeled when it neared him, and as in the light
of noon
He saw the forms of comrades who across the South
were strewn;
He saw the brave companion who had battled by his
side—
The tears welled up again just as they did the day he
died.
Then, "Halt!" the bugles sounded, and he heard his war-
time chief
Call in his kindest, clearest tones: "This is the last re-
lief!"

"March on!" The flag was waving and the soldiers
marched away;
And he went singing with them, far beyond the Gates of
Day,
The bugles pealing gladly and the line with no more
gaps—
The bugles singing sweetly in that benison of "Taps".
And fifes were mad and merry, and the drums were
laughing too,
For he marched beside the colors as he led the grand
review!

THE PRAYER OF THE KING

And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord.—Book of Kings.

Lord, let me lay the tinsel down—
The senseless scepter and the crown
 That I must bear;
The ermined robe of purple hue,
The gauds and rings and jewels, too,
 That I must wear.

Let me but cast them in a heap—
All these; each is but poor and cheap—
 An idle thing.
The robe, the scepter, crown and all
But form a covering and pall
 To hide a king.

I know the people bend the knees
And bare their heads. It is to these—
 To this—this stuff;
To ermine, velvet and to gold,
To jewels glittering and cold,—
 'Tis not enough.

THE PRAYER OF THE KING

'Tis not enough that they should deem
The crown and trappings, with their gleam,
 A royal thing.
Lord, were these piled upon the throne
The cry would be for them alone:
 "This is the king!"

Lord, let me lay the tinsel down—
Be more than a mere gilded clown,
 Or jeweled sham.
Let me aside these baubles throw
That me they all may see and know
 For what I am.

Let them but see my mind and soul
For ever striving to the goal!
 But let me fling
Away the purpled pomp, the throne,
And hear them hailing me, alone:
 "Behold, the king!"

THE DAY OF A THOUSAND YEARS

For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday
when it is past, and as a watch in the night.—The
Psalms.

And one star calls to another
The rich strains of a song
Till the deeps of space glow with its grace
And echo it full strong;
And whirling out of the silence
A world of worlds appears
In an onward rush through the endless hush—
And a day is a thousand years.

And one star sings to another,
And sun holds speech with sun,
While the drifting veil of a vapor pale
Shows another world begun.
But we count time by a dawning
Or mark by a twilight fall—
Yet the stars sing on when the years are gone,
And what are we, after all?

The words and the hopes and doubtings,
The joy and the dreams and dread,
And the puny lives in the puny hives
Where toil is done for bread;

THE DAY OF A THOUSAND YEARS

A day, a night, and another—
A round of the spinning ball;
A sigh and a smile for the briefest while—
And what are we, after all?

And one star calls to another
A song we may not know;
Calls a distant sun to a dying sun
As the ages come and go.
And we mark time by a minute,
And croon over smiles and tears—
But the stars sing on when the worlds are gone,
And a day is a thousand years.

THE LOOM OF TIME

My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle.—Job.

Swift as a weaver's shuttle
Truly and quickly cast,
Every day is woven
Into the silent past;
Into the wondrous fabric
Go all the love and hate—
All in a fadeless pattern,
Lasting and intricate.

Here there are strands of beauty—
Kindness has lent its gold;
There we see barren places,
Sullen and dull and cold.
All of our clouds and sunshine,
All of our joy and pain,
Leap from the flying shuttle,
Full to the waiting chain.

Thus do the days go from us,
Thus does the weaver bind
Into a blended picture
All that we leave behind;

THE LOOM OF TIME

Ready with flying shuttle,
Lever and loom and thread,
For all the coming actions—
For all the days ahead.

So may we look behind us
Through all the web of days,
Seeing our good and evil
Blent in its endless maze.
Purple and gold and crimson
Vie with the sodden black—
Whether of pride or sorrow,
We may not have it back.

Swift as a weaver's shuttle
Day hastens on to day—
Always the fabric changes,
Always the colors play;
Now with a gloomy shadow,
Now with a glow sublime—
So go the deathless records
Into the loom of Time.

THE LOG OF LIFE

They that go down to the sea in ships.—The Psalms.

Now you set sail and I set sail upon the sea of life,
And times there are when comes a gale that cuts us like
a knife—

When comes a blast that shudders past and shrivels up
our souls—

It blows from off the barren rocks where sorrow spreads
her shoals,

Where bitterly the billows break and chatter of defeat;
Long after we have struggled by, their echoes hoarsely
beat.

Some of us sail but where the sea in silver spray is
curled;

Some of us beat beyond the rim that bounds the rounding
world;

Some of us ride upon the tide that in the moonlight
gleams

And sighs of peace and happiness within the port of
dreams;

And some go blindly up and down across the silent sea
To find the vanished harbor in the land of used-to-be.

THE LOG OF LIFE

But everywhere and anywhere our ships may moor or
sail

There is a call for one and all—a wholesome, friendly
hail.

It may be in the port of dreams, or off of sorrow's shoals,
Or when in mid-sea's placidness the vessel calmly rolls;
Wherever, on or off our course, we will but pause to hear,
There comes to us a hail that rings with fellowship and
cheer.

So you go down and I go down into the sea of life,
To feel the bite of angry winds along the reefs of strife,
To hear the strains of dim refrains from off some singing
coast—

But through it all the friendly call is what we count the
most.

The sea of life is long and wide, but we sail to the end—
Through shine and fog we write the log: "This day we
hailed a friend."

NIGHT

As a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night.—Jeremiah.

When you have walked the weary way—
The weary way that leads by noon
And takes you to the end of day,
You know there waits for you a boon;
You know that on ahead is rest,
For roses drip with twilight dew
And all things seem but for the best
When Night holds out her arms to you.

When Night holds out her arms to you,
You know your cares have found release;
That what stern battling you must do
Is for the time bid pause by peace;
For down the slopes the shadows drift
And singing breezes falter through
The silence where the hills uplift—
And Night holds out her arms to you.

When Night holds out her arms, it seems
As though she brought each one a crown—
A crown of happiness and dreams.
She comes to countryside and town

NIGHT

With poppies in her dusky hands
And poppies on her garments, too;
All gracefully she comes and stands
And holds her soothing arms to you.

Just so when you are through with strife,
And, all world-weary on your way,
You reach the ending of this life—
For life is but a little day—
There will be naught to make you sad,
But all will be fair to your view,
You will be comforted and glad
When Night holds out her arms to you.

“TO THE HILLS”

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.—The Psalms.

“I to the hills will lift mine eyes”—I’ve heard ’em sing
the psalm,
An’ thought of how, close to the skies, the hills rose
grand an’ calm;
How peacefully they raised their heads an’ stood serene
an’ still,
A-blazin’ with their greens an’ reds—each hope-inspirin’
hill.
I like the sober hush they’ve got—it’s just as if they
meant
To send to me this gentle thought: “Oh, poor man, be
content!”

The hills! God made ’em every one, an’ freshens ’em
with dew,
An’ makes ’em golden with the sun to gladden me an’
you.
Down here there’s bitterness an’ strife; an’ lots o’ things
seem vain;
An’ we make our complaints at life here on the noisy
plain.

"TO THE HILLS"

But there, the hills lift up their heads, an' we can look
an' see
Where brooks play in their gleamin' beds an' sparkle in
their glee.

I've watched the hills when just at dawn the sun swept
up the slope,
An' knew my night of doubt had gone an' left a day of
hope.
I've watched the hills at evenin' time, all silvered by the
moon,
When from their sides in tones sublime the breezes
brought a croon,
An' all the world grew good to me—an' all the world was
still.
Oh, them's the times a man can see the glory of a hill!

I reckon David must 'a' been a man like me or you,
That had his own sore fights to win, just as all humans
do;
An' he looked to them hills of his that breathed of quiet
peace—
Just like our hills, where comfort is, an' all our troubles
cease.
"I to the hills will lift mine eyes"—I've heard 'em sing
the psalm;
An' in each mellow note there lies a blessin' pure an'
calm.



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LABOR

What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboreth?—Ecclesiastes.

Where the sullen desert slept
There came a king to rule;
Where the sluggish river crept
Through shallow and through pool;
Came a spirit swift and strong
The silences to break
With a ceaseless, humming song:
"Oh, ye who sleep, awake!"

Night was day—an endless dawn—
All at this king's command;
Still his work swept on and on
And into every land;
Deserts blossomed as the rose
And wondrous cities grew.
But this king unresting goes
In search of deeds to do.

Bare of arm and brown of hand
And clear and keen of eye,
Knowing that beneath the sand
Uncounted countries lie;

LABOR

Knowing that the drowsing plain
He may awake at length
To the life of golden grain,
He chants his song of strength.

At the thrilling of his call
The forest and the field,
City street and city wall
A chiming echo yield.
Of it all, what is his gain?
What profit has he won?
This: he has beneath his reign
The Kingdom of Things Done.

THE GOD OF THE UNAFRAID

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.—The Psalms.

Now there are new religions. Many the codes and creeds;
Many the quibbling changes to fit with our fancied needs;
All of them waxing milder, waning in strength and tone;
None of them stern and sturdy; none of them stands
alone—

None like the old religions, those that the fathers made—
Built on the fearless basis—the God of the Unafraid.

Mind you the old-time people? Questioning naught and
stern;

Knowing the lifelong lesson ere they were set to learn;
Seeing the line was rigid, marking for ill or good—
Holding to step beyond it led where the sinners stood.
Mind you the old-time people? They who the law obeyed,
Fearing and finding and praying the God of the Un-
afraid.

Life was a constant battle into which they were flung;
Thoughts were of old time sinful ere they were given
tongue.

Aye, if a hand offended, straightway it must be cut,
Else would the gates of Heaven be to them ever shut.

THE GOD OF THE UNAFRAID

That was an old-time picture, yet it will never fade—
Thus did the people worship the God of the Unafraid.

Now there are new religions, fragile and flimsy things;
Soothing and soft and subtle in all of their fashionings.
Mind you the old-time people? Never their fears could
cease,

But they were not as we are—theirs were the hearts at
peace;

Theirs were the souls complacent, knowing and undis-
mayed;

Theirs was the living master—the God of the Unafraid.

BE A MAN

Quit you like men; be strong.—Corinthians.

If you walk your way with a fearless tread,
You will find some shade on the weary road;
If you go your way, neither forced nor led,
You may taste grim toil, but will feel no goad,
And will gather strength as you bear your load.

If the cup is filled, it is yours to drink,
Though the brim be touched by a bitter draft;
There are gibes for you if you seem to shrink,
And the taunting jest and the biting shaft
Are the meed of him with a cup unquaffed.

And the word is this: that the man who whines
Or complains aloud of the cold or heat,
Or the labor, falls in the hardest lines,
For he drowns the sound of the music sweet
That is meant to time all the trudging feet.

But the one who knows where the bitter is
Will one day come to the cup again
And find rare wine in that draft of his—
That draft of his, which was bitter then—
For he is of those who are quit like men.

BE A MAN

And the greatest deed that a man might do—
 Though he work with cunning thought and plan;
Though his acts be known all the ages through;
 Though he walk behind; though he lead the van—
 It is this, that he make himself a Man.

If you quit yourself as a man is quit,
 There will be no one who will wisely nod
Or will wag the tongue with a waspish wit—
 But with head erect you may walk abroad
 In the face of mankind and your God.

THE CLUTCH OF CHANCE

The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. . . . But time and chance happeneth to them all.—Ecclesiastes.

For the man who wins, there is pomp and pride,
And the laurel wreath, and the cheer, beside;
And for him who fights, but in fighting falls
There are echoes still of the trumpet calls—
But there is no balm in his bitter lot
If he meets defeat with his fight unfought.

There are sore defeats that are all unknown,
And they send their gloom to the proudest throne;
And they plunge their shade on the humblest life—
For they bring no stress and they bring no strife;
By a time or chance is the loser caught
And he knows defeat ere his fight is fought.

There are singers mute—and their hearts are wrung
And their souls are thrilled with the songs unsung;
There are men who dreamed of a picture fair—
But the hand is still and the canvas bare;
And the others, too, with their goals unsought—
They have seen defeat with their fights unfought.

THE CLUTCH OF CHANCE

**If a man goes down with his sword aflash
And has heard the lance and the armor crash—
If he loses then, he will shed no tears;
He has dealt his blows, he has heard the cheers;
But his soul must shrink from he knows not what
When he meets defeat with his fight unfought.**

JONAH AT THE GATE

And God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly.—Jonah.

A city filled with purple sin;
A mighty place of wickedness,
All white without and black within;
Its virtues ever growing less.
The sound of dancing in the street
And songs and curses in the hall;
And, borne on slow, unwilling feet,
A Jonah nears the city wall—
A Jonah stands beside the gate
And chants the stern decree of fate.

A Jonah calls the curses down,
There, where they listen open-eyed:
Then hodden in his dusty gown
He turns and walks away with pride.
He climbs the low, embowered hill
And looks to see the city die—

JONAH AT THE GATE

But God repents him of his will.

Then Jonah cries: "A fool was I!"
A Jonah at the city gate,
Full sorry at the change of late.

To-day, how many men but look
At all the bad their brother does,
And shout he shall be brought to book—
If ever seeming sinner was!
But God, he knows the heart of man,
And ever has—and ever could
With his all-comprehensive scan
Discern some little trace of good.
Yet Jonah at the city gate,
'Mid withered gourd-vines, rails at fate.

JUDGE NOT

Judge not; that ye be not judged.—St. Matthew.

Who are you, to sit in judgment on the saying or the song,

With a finger raised and ready to determine right or wrong?

Who are you, to weigh the motives of another's thought or act—

In a solemn contemplation warping fancy into fact?

Who are you, to scent the evil? Is your impulse free from grudge?

Is the world a tittle better for the judgments that you judge?

Who are you, to take the measure of an erring fellow-man?

Whence the power and precision of your comprehensive scan?

How you hold the scales in balance! I have never understood

Why you shouted out the evil; why you whispered of the good.

JUDGE NOT

Who are you, to wait the moment, when with wink and
smile and nudge
You may call the world to witness of the judgments that
you judge?

Who are you? But who am I, to set you down a hypo-
crite?

Who am I to doubt the justice of the judgments you have
writ?

Who are you, to judge the others as they come across
your view?

Who am I, to sit and murmur of my discontent with you?
How do we know—puny critics!—as the way of life we
trudge

How we wring the heart of justice with the judgments
that we judge?

THE GLORY OF THE NIGHT

He made the stars, also.—Genesis.

It may be as the wise ones say,
That all the stars which gleam for us
Grew patiently, day unto day,
From out a vapor nebulous—
But this one thought: that they were thrown
Like jewels from the Master's hand
And over heaven's garden sown
With one great sweep, is far more grand.

What marvel could the heart desire,
Could one have faltered through that night
Until it glowed with living fire
All pink, and emerald, and white?
But to have wondered at the dark
And doubted at the gloom which swung
Above, behind, before, then mark
The glory of the stars outflung!

To have stood, cowed, within that night
That seemed to reach, and fold, and clutch,
And press grim hands to shut the sight;
To feel the darkness bend and touch,

THE GLORY OF THE NIGHT

And then, out of the unsolved hush,
To see uncounted blazing swirls
That looped the sky in dazzling rush
And decked the breast of time with pearls!

To have seen this—to have stood there
Where everything with fear was rife
And terror brooded in the air—
To see the night receive its life!
It may be that the stars were made
As reckoned by the wisest men,
But to have seen this, thrilled, afraid,
Were worth the being dead since then.

THE LESSON OF GRIEF

I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul.—Isaiah.

“I shall go softly all my years”—
Thus said a saddened king of old,
When, through the mistiness of tears,
He saw the grief his days must hold.
And he went softly. All his days
Were days that glowed with gentleness,
The paths of peace his chosen ways.
In time his grief he came to bless.

There is an echo for each laugh—
An echo from the ones who hear.
But they have fellowship, who quaff
The bitter drink brewed from a tear.
The man who knows of sorrow's weight
Is never in that woe alone;
The mystic brotherhood of fate
Gives him a thousand friends unknown.

He knows the grief that others feel,
By what is tugging at his heart;
Of all the blows that life may deal
To others, he would bear his part.

THE LESSON OF GRIEF

Grief has a wondrous softening:
It betters every soul it sears—
Though it touch commoner or king
He goes more softly all his years.

A softer cadence fills his songs;
A truer grasp is in his hand,
For, out of seeming bitter wrongs,
He comes at last to understand
The heart-beats of his fellow-men,
The clinging of their hopes and fears.
When grief brings him her message, then
He goes more softly all his years.

"GETHSEMANE"

And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane.—St. Mark.

Each one has his Gethsemane; for each there is a day
When he shall halt, fear-stricken by the darkness in the
way;
When he, faint-hearted, weary of the griefs he yet must
bear,
Shall turn aside into the shade and soothing calmness
there—
Shall turn aside and bow his head, and on his bended
knees
Pray that he may not take the cup and drain it to the
lees.

The garden called Gethsemane—we enter it alone,
With sorrows that we only know, and griefs that are our
own;
We hide among the shadows where no eye may see us
shrink,
And murmur at the hyssop in the cup that we must
drink—
The cup wherein all sadness and all bitternesses swim,
And ask why fate has poured the draft that fills it to the
brim.

"GETHSEMANE"

A resting place—Gethsemane—a place for wearied souls
And aching hearts to heal the smarts that tell of unwon
goals;

A place serene and comforting; a spot of gentle calm,
Where breezes whisper through the leaves a murmur
sweet with balm,

Where, all unseen, the naked soul may come to under-
stand

The reason for the heavy cup that waits the tardy hand.

Each one has his Gethsemane, where, stumbling, tired
and worn,

And bent with all the heavy load of sorrow he has borne,
He may find rest, and know that now his night is almost
gone,

And see ahead the golden glint that marks a happy dawn.
And then, content and fortified in heart, he takes his cup
That brims with pungent bitterness, and bravely drinks
it up.

THE MOTHERS OF THE THIEVES

Then were two thieves crucified with him; one on the right hand and another on the left.—St. Matthew.

When it grew night on Calvary,
When darkness trembled down,
It seemed no light again could be
On country-side or town.
The somber clouds shut out the sky
And flung themselves and swirled
Above the crosses reaching high—
That sorrow of the world.

When it grew dark on Calvary,
Two women, heavy-eyed,
And fearful lest a one might see,
Crept up on either side.
In halting dread they faltered on,
Each battling with her fears—
Their cheeks were sunken, pale and wan,
And stained with many tears.

When all was still on Calvary,
Two women, torn with sighs,
Would turn from what they knew should be
Held up before their eyes.

THE MOTHERS OF THE THIEVES

They bowed their heads in all their woe
And sobbing there, each one
Turned, down the bitter way to go,
And cried: "My son! My son!"

When all was done on Calvary,
The clouds beat back the stars;
One cross was empty, of the three,
And two had weighted bars.
There, dumbly asking whence and why
This web that sorrow weaves,
Stood, questioning the leaden sky,
The mothers of the thieves.

AMBITION

Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.—
Ecclesiastes.

Ambition is a circle where men run,
Each hoping he the leading place may find,
Each backward glance shows him the winning one;
Each forward look tells him he is behind.
He quaffs betimes the red wine of success,
And then aside he casts the empty cup—
Another round, and, in his eagerness,
That which he flung away he would take up.

Ambition is a circle where men run,
Each fancying himself may hold the lead—
A race with prizéd guerdon never won;
Where no one is contented with his meed;
Where men go, striving ceaselessly, the round,
And think at last their efforts are complete,
When, following, they hear the warning sound—
The falling of a nearing rival's feet.

BALANCING

Cast up the sum of good resolves
 With which we met the year;
Upon the lengthy debit side
 Let all the faults appear;
Write down the good we did not do—
 The goals we have not won—
But write in sturdy characters
 The bad we have not done.

Let all the merit we've acquired,
 In figures firm and fair,
All luminous and fine to see
 Be boldly written there;
Set down the good we meant to do—
 The good but half-begun—
And write, high on the credit side,
 The bad we have not done.

'Tis hard to live in gentleness;
 'Tis hard to make the year
A page—a blotless page of joy,
 And honesty, and cheer;

BALANCING

'Tis harder yet the evil things
That all beset, to shun—
So write in brave and honest strokes
The bad we have not done.

The good we meant to do—the deeds
So oft misunderstood;
The thwarted good we try to do,
And would do, if we could;
The noble deeds we set upon
And have accomplished none—
Write them—and with them credit all
The bad we have not done.

AT THE SIGN OF THE SMILE

We're weary with walking the Highway of Life;
We're fretted and blustered with worry and strife;
Let us drop by the wayside the heavy old load
And rest at the inn at the turn of the road—

Let us tarry a while
At the Sign of the Smile.

Ho, the Sign of the Smile is a jolly old inn,
With gargoyles about it that do naught but grin;
There's always a laugh, and a shoulder to whack,
And always an echo to answer us back!

Let us tarry a while
At the Sign of the Smile.

At the Sign of the Smile—we will linger long there,
For the strictest of rules is the ban upon care;
And the guests must forget there are such things as
years,
And never shed any but laughter-brought tears!

Let us tarry a while
At the Sign of the Smile.

AT THE SIGN OF THE SMILE

There'll be flagons of jollity for us to sip,
And many and many a rollicking quip.
Though the jokes may be old, like the juice of the vine
They mellow with age to the richest of wine.

Let us tarry a while
At the Sign of the Smile.

Let us tarry a while at the Sign of the Smile—
Forget all our griefs in the joys that beguile;
Let us pleasure the noon till it changes to night,
Then up with our loads—and we'll find they are light,

If we tarry a while
At the Sign of the Smile.

A TOAST TO THE LOSING MAN

Here's to the man that loses! That patient, luckless
wight
Who battles ever manfully, though in a losing fight;
Who works away by night and day and ever meets de-
feat,
Yet knows that, dim ahead of him, success—success is
sweet!
Drink to his health—the losing man!—commoner, prince
or priest—
Who has no hate for his hard fate—for he has tried, at
least.

Health to the man that loses! The one that works in
vain;
The one that struggles valiantly, and garners naught but
pain.
Down to the grave his heart is brave, his hope is ever
high,
For he has learned what we have spurned—that it is
good to try!
Drink to his luck—the loser's luck—skeleton at the
feast!
Sorrow and rue may be his due, but he has tried, at least.

A TOAST TO THE LOSING MAN

Here's to the man that loses!—loses and pays the price;
Pays the price of the loser, unfavored of fortune's dice!
Courage to dare a fate unfair—that is his goodly mark;
Mettle and might to search for light, though groping in
the dark!

Drink to his health—the losing man!—soldier or slave
or priest.

What though he fall? He's best of all, for he has tried,
at least.

A WAYSIDE CONVERSATION

Fame and Death, upon a day,
Met and chatted by the way.

"Greeting, friend," in cheery tones,
Murmured Death, with happy smile;
"Let us rest beside the way.
Need we hurry all the while?"

"I must hurry," answered Fame.
"Farther down this road I haste.
One abides there whom I must
Give my sweetest fruits to taste."

"Rest you, rest you, brother mine,"
Death insisted graciously.
"But an hour ago that one
Answered to a call from me."

Fame and Death, upon a day,
Chatted softly by the way.

THE FOREFATHERS

And I have given you a land for which ye did not labor, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them.
—Joshua.

We quarrel of land and line;
We bicker of work and wage;
We trouble our souls with a doleful sign,
Forgetting our heritage—
Forgetting the tireless hands;
Forgetting the restless feet
That fared undaunted through unknown lands
Till the path was made complete.

The fathers—the men who dreamed,
And, dreaming, were strong to dare,
To struggle ahead to the goal that gleamed,
A prize that was rich and fair.
The fathers—the men who thought
Of all that the future held,
And, hearts uplifted, essayed and wrought
All the work their dreams compelled.

THE FOREFATHERS

We pluck from the vines they set;
We walk in the ways they made;
We harvest their fields; and their forests yet
Are giving us rest and shade.
The fathers—the men of old
Who builded a place for us,
A country magnificent; brave and bold
In their faith all glorious.

We quarrel and dread and doubt,
Forgetting we only hold
The comfort within and the peace without
By grace of the men of old;
Forgetting the toil and stress,
Forgetting the bygone age
When cities were planned in their comeliness
For a future heritage.

IN THE INNER TEMPLE

In the inner temple
Of your heart there lies
A secluded altar,
Sacred from all eyes.
You the hidden image
Never will disclose,
And the thing you worship
Of it never knows.

In the inner temple,
Sacredly you hold—
Holy, high, and hidden
Back of cloth of gold—
Something of your dreaming,
Something of your dread,
Something of your living,
Something long, long dead.

Times you go to worship;
Times you go to pray;
Yet you never, softly,
Draw the veil away.
You alone enshrine it—
Know what it may be—
Still you tremble, fearing
All the world must see.

THE GREAT UNSATISFIED

The men who are not satisfied
Are they who set the pace—
The men who do not meet defeat
With calm, contented face.
The men who labor on and on
With minds and fingers skilled—
They are the great unsatisfied
Who plan, and fight, and build.

The men who are not satisfied—
They are the ones who lead;
They force humanity ahead
With strident word and deed;
They bring us out of bygone ways;
They guide us through the dark
To where some man, unsatisfied,
Has set a shining mark.

The men who are not satisfied—
They gird the world with wires;
They belt the land with rails of steel
And pierce the air with spires;
They loose the leash of sweet content
With which mankind is tied.
We never pay the debt we owe
The great unsatisfied.

THE FOUR GUESTS

A knock at the door—but he
Was dreaming a dream of fame,
And the one who knocked drew softly back,
And never again he came.
A knock at the door—as soft,
As soft, as shy, as a dove.
But the dreamer dreamed till the guest was gone—
And the guest was Love.

A knock at the door—again
The dreamer dreamed away,
Unheeding, deaf to the gentle call
Of the one who came that day.
A knock at the door—no more
The guest to that door came.
Yet the dreamer dreamed of the one who called,
For the guest was Fame.

A knock at the door—but still
He gave it no reply;
And the waiting guest gave a cheery hail
Ere he slowly wandered by.
A knock at the door—in dreams
The dreamer fain would grope
Till the guest stole on, with a humbled sigh—
And the guest was Hope.

THE FOUR GUESTS

A knock at the door—'twas loud,
With might in every stroke;
And the dreamer stopped in his dreaming thought,
And suddenly awoke.
A knock at the door! He ran
With the swiftmess of a breath;
And the door swung wide, and the guest came in—
And the guest was Death.

UNFINISHED THINGS

Unfinished things! The verse begun
 In ringing meter, strong and free,
Yet laid aside, ere it was done,
 By some weak soul of poesy.
The books—the books to help mankind,
 To banish care and sorrow's stings,
Abandoned in the daily grind—
 The pathos of unfinished things!

The sentence broken all too soon,
 Before the kindly words were said;
The words that might have been a croon
 Where sore affliction made its bed;
The plans unheeded—plans that might
 Have made of swineherds ermined kings—
No day goes by but brings to light
 The pathos of unfinished things.

The songs unsung! What mellow strains
 Had lent their gladness to our life!
What cadences to soothe our pains
 And hush our petty stress and strife,
Had some blithe measure faltered not
 When hands all careless swept the strings
With lilt and rapture now forgot.
 Ah, pathos of unfinished things!

THE LEGEND OF LAUGHTER

*It is a legend, such, in sooth,
As pagans tell within the booth
Where there is any ware but truth:*

That when the world was but begun
And firstlings of all things were there—
The first rose smiling at the sun
And lending glory to the air,
The first dove soaring on its wings,
The first man walking on the ground—
'Twas then the Maker of All Things
Disposed of every sweet sound.

That He within the garden sate
And made division of them all;
The song of one bird to its mate;
The rhythm of the trumpet call;
The diapason of the sea;
The singing of the ones who reap;
The rustle of the leafy tree
And whispers that through grasses creep;

That He from out his hand let fall
The music of the straining sail,
And melodies that men enthrall—
The lyric of the nightingale;

THE LEGEND OF LAUGHTER

The untraced murmurs of the night
That dreamily sigh from the west—
All sounds He gave to give delight,
And one was sweeter than the rest.

That those who stood about and heard
The throbbing of the thrilling drum,
And joyous caroling of bird
And honey-bee's contented hum,
Were curious and marveling,
And wondered if there could be found
A beast, or bird, or anything
That should receive the sweetest sound;

That then the Maker of them all
Said: "Lo, this fairest sound shall go,
Not to the thrilling trumpet call,
Nor to the love-song soft and low,
Nor to the ever-singing sea,
But it shall be"—the Maker smiled—
"The richest of all melody
Shall be the laughter of a child!"

*It is a legend—pagan, too—
That out of pagan dreamings grew—
Yet, haply, it might well be true.*

EDEN

So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.—Genesis.

We have eaten the fruit, as decreed we should;
And we know of evil and know of good.
We have walked our ways with our heads erect
And we take the paths that the fates select;
But many the times that we call to mind
The wondrous Eden we left behind.

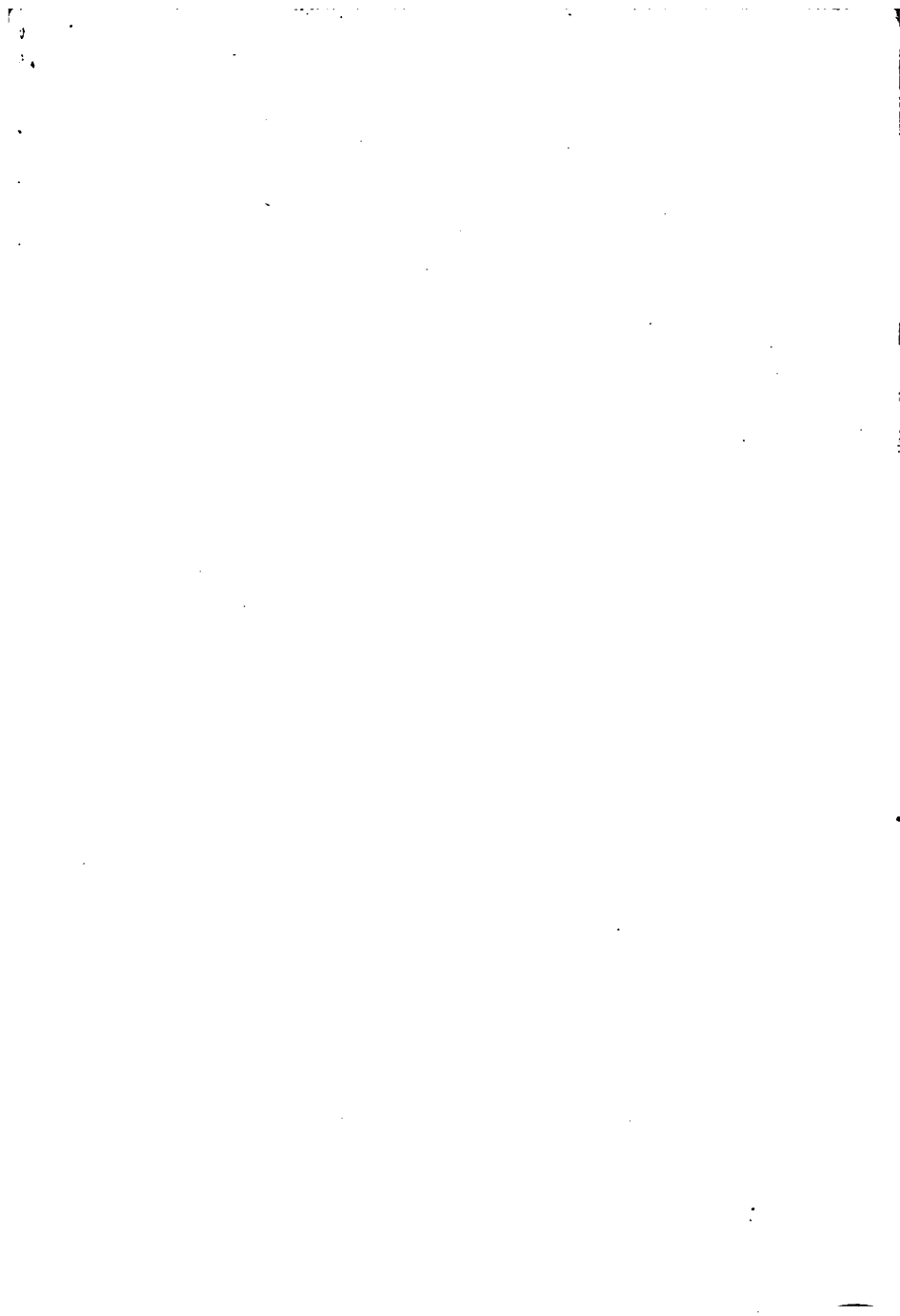
We remember now how we left the gate,
And the road seemed pleasant and broad and straight;
But the hills were many and helps were few,
And oh, how tardy our footsteps grew!
And we fain would turn to our Eden, then—
Would fain go back to the joys again.

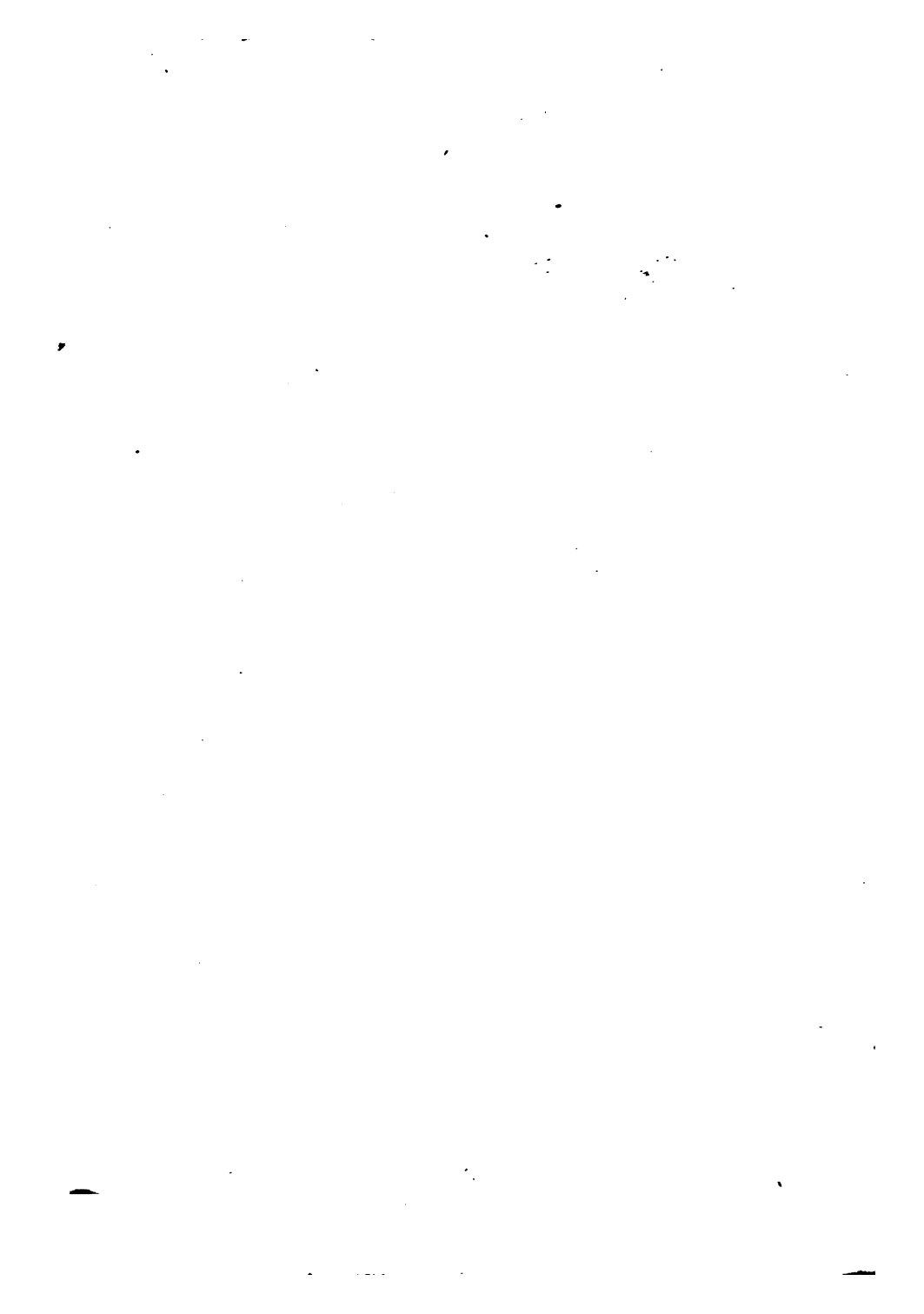
We must earn our bread in our sweat, and eat
While forging on with unwilling feet;
And the road is rough and the way is steep,
And our dreams so fair that we fear to sleep—
For we dream and dream how the flowers tossed
In the Eden scorned; in the Eden lost.

EDEN

Sometimes—sometimes, on a lone, high hill,
When they give us rest, and the air is still,
We gaze far back down the dwindling road—
Far back where the scented roses glowed—
Then a flaming sword we can see, in truth,
And it bars the Eden we knew—our youth!







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